
TAKEN IN HAND

2003-2013

VOLUME I

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WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT TAKEN IN HAND

"[Taken In Hand] is not a regressive return to patriarchy but a more nuanced, sophisticated, informed form of relationship that is far more equal than mechanically-equal relationships! Bravo." - saint_UK

"[U]ntil 2 days ago I thought I was a crazy, ... abnormal woman. [T]hen I stumbled onto the Taken in Hand website. I have never felt such relief, such internal peace in my life. This whole idea of being loved and trusting enough in another to place my, his and our well-being into his hands was exactly what I have been searching for my whole life. I spent 16 hours just reading... It is like a huge weight has lifted off my shoulders." - Melissa

"It was my wonderful husband who made me ...see how a Taken In Hand relationship would be everything I ever wanted... Nothing... has ever changed me to such an extent... nor has anything been as liberating." - Peach

"[Taken In Hand is] a site advocating male led relationships, and it doesn't suffer from the flaws of BDSM that we've identified... It's a little too general, and too focused on marital relationships. But that aside, what it describes sounds a lot more authentically dominant than the BDSM I've seen. The [man is in control of the woman] in all spheres. But because he loves her and cares for her, he will behave within reason. Also, neither party has a way out, because they are married and believe marriage is for life. All that together makes this sort of relation-

ship a lot more male dominant than typical BDSM ones. It's subversive, yet healthy and natural." - basilransom

"How does Taken In Hand help the man to feel positive about his relationship?"

"Because it's SEXY. Because it allows him to dominate his woman in a loving and romantic way, which turns them both on and heats their love life up to a toasty sizzle. I see [Taken In Hand] as a chance for him to have fun flexing his manhood muscles and enjoy the thrill of dominating the woman he loves. That way it's a win-win situation for both of them. And it deepens the romantic bonds of love between us because few things can liven up a marriage like deep sexual passion." - DeeMarie

"[I]n Taken In Hand, I am enhancing and extending my power as a woman, and enriching my life and personality. I give up NOTHING, and gain the world.... [M]y perception of Taken In Hand is that there are few other venues that can compare for teaching men the responsible, healthy uses of power. It gives men skills and confidence they can use not just in their sexual relationships, but also with their children, in their professions, and out in the community. Taken In Hand requires a far higher level of courage, sacrifice, responsibility, and personal integrity than many [men] will even think to aspire to." - Sara

"Taken In Hand is about having the man in charge because you like it

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like that, it's not about blind obedience or never having your own way about anything." - Louise

"First of all, all you guys should check out this website, www.takeninhand.com, very interesting stuff here, check out the Commanding Presence [and] Alpha Males articles, [...] very valuable insights. [...] I'm taken by this site." - Eric

"Taken In Hand is serious about the nature of male-female relationships, [...], in way I find exhilarating, honest, refreshing, courageous, and exciting." - HoneyBun

"Taken In Hand: Fascinating... blog that deals with difficult and hot topics!" - Polly Peachum

"The Taken in Hand website has proven to be a valuable source for intelligent and well thought out articles exploring [male-led relationships]. [...] For women who have longed for a relationship such as this and have no idea where to start, this is a great site for you. For men that want to better understand the whole concept from a women's point of view, this site is a must read." - Michael Masterson

"If you think my perspective on dating isn't politically correct you should go read Taken In Hand. [It has] posts with titles like, When rape is a gift. You go, girl. Defy those hairy-armpitted feminists and enjoy yourself. :)" - Jacqueline Passey

"There are lots of websites for people in the BDSM, D/s, DD (domestic discipline) and spanking communities. There are websites for people who belong to religions that advocate male-head-of-household marriage. There are even websites

for Christians who are interested in BDSM. But there are very few websites for people who are interested in male-led intimate relationships but who are not interested in all that the above communities associate with this kind of relationship (jargon, clothes, etc.)

"Some of us don't even like thinking of this as a lifestyle. [...]"

"If you are interested in this kind of relationship but are not interested in BDSM or D/s or DD or spanking websites, there's a new website for you: Taken In Hand" - Tom Newman

"Taken in Hand is a fascinating site. It's refreshing to hear women speaking in those terms, standing up for core desires that are, for many people, an unpopular view..."

"What these women want, and apparently have found, is an experience and feeling of freedom to simply be who they desire to be. They have found REAL MEN." - J. Martinez

"If you're looking for real people who live a "male-led" relationship... check out the Taken In Hand site, which I found so much more colorful than Fifty Shades of Grey." - Kim

"[Taken In Hand is] a necessary read... Very complex, lots of power shifts, combining respect with [control], and pleasure. [...] The whole shebang. I'm glad I found it." - Dutchman

"Taken In Hand... is the name of a website that I discovered less than two years ago and which made a big difference to my life. It made me understand what it was I wanted and helped me to come to terms with my own feelings and gave me

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the impetus to talk seriously to my husband about our relationship for the first time ever really." - Louise C

"[Taken In Hand is] one of the most exciting sites on the internet!" - Malcolm

"[T]he whole damn site really is one of the most well articulated (pro/con) loaded blogs I've seen. It provides a cross section of how people are feeling out there even amongst those who are "seemingly" natural allies." - zbigdogX

"As I view it, I'm a control freak. I love to be in control. However, I fantasize about that control being stripped from me and handed over to someone else....namely, my husband. I'm just glad I found a site that makes me realize I'm not a freak for wanting [a Taken In Hand relationship]" - GypsyGirl

""[Taken In Hand is] a wonderful website [...] [I]t's about the interpersonal dynamics of loving relationships where the man is the boss. [I]t's assumed that both partners are in it because that's what they want and have chosen. Also, unlike many other "traditional marriage" sites, it's not coming from any sort of biblical perspective. ... Some of the best writing I've seen on these topics, from a variety of authors." - Dee

"Taken In Hand is actually a very important site for me and it helped a great deal in realizing how much women in general like to be dominated in their sexual relationship." - Athol Kay

"A very cool site" - The Yeti

"Thank you for providing such a positive, validating place for like-minded people to talk about this in a

way that affirms the dignity of both men and women" - Mary

"fantastic site" - Danevah

"Taken In Hand is male led but male intimately led. ... I do like the Taken In Hand focus on family and the focus that marriage is between one man and one woman. That is actually very important to me." - Frank Nelson

"Innately, women look for men able to take charge and come to despise the man failing to live up to that instinctive expectation.

"Over the next several years—as footloose and fancy-free lifestyles become increasingly fraught with dubious outcomes amid turbulent circumstances—finding and maintaining stable relationships will become imperative. Although by no means a perfect solution for all problems, Taken In Hand can solve or reduce many marital difficulties." - Noone

"Un site remarquable" - Camille Meudon

"Visit Taken in Hand for a lot of good thoughts. I think you'll find them useful [...]" - Katy

"a wonderful site" - CoHC

"The answer to every single discussion is there. Best piece of text I read ever...And it rings SO true." - Revan

"What a wonderful website. ... [S]o much of this I can relate to my life. ... It has been a while since I have read a website that was "different" than most." - Carla

"This website is just what I have been looking for for ages—but did not even know it! Have become weary of [other] sites, etc. They never really properly address the psy-

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chological components, all the subtleties [...] [A]nyway, thanks so much for existing, I have been telling my friends...hope your website

sticks around forever!" - A Girl From Texas¹

GLOSSARY

Do not read this glossary to get an idea of what Taken In Hand is about, because these terms are not about Taken In Hand, and I, the site owner, don't use them myself.

A Taken In Hand relationship

Taken In Hand relationships are wholehearted sexually-exclusive marriages in which the husband wears the trousers and is firmly in charge (to his wife's delight!)—and he always puts his wife and their relationship first. Putting her and the relationship first is the key to creating a marriage in which the man is in control in a good, healthy and sustainable way. Taken In Hand wives tend not to claim to be submissive (though their husbands may well consider them to be so) but they do respect, honour and appreciate their husbands and strive to please them.

BDSM

Taken In Hand is not BDSM, so if you've come to this site looking for BDSM you are going to be very disappointed. BDSM (bondage, dominance, submission, sadism, masochism), also called "kinky", refers to a number of different ways of interacting sexually, and/or relationship styles, including very ritualised, stylised modes of interaction. Some BDSM relationships involve sexual

scenes and role-playing in a particular style (such as master-slave or dominant-submissive) but outside the sexual arena the relationship (if there is a relationship) is completely equal. 24/7 BDSM relationships can be an extended scene with all the safeguards for which the BDSM community is well-known, or (I'm told) it can be more like a Taken In Hand relationship, with no safety net. BDSM is associated with play parties and munchies, promiscuity, open relationships, extreme sex, pain, humiliation play, and the use of particular costumes, modes of address, rituals and protocols, but not all BDSM folk enjoy all or any of these things. BDSM folk tend to think that Taken In Hand is BDSM but BDSM leaves most Taken In Hand folk cold, so I don't think Taken In Hand can really be said to be BDSM. Moreover, BDSM community ideas, behaviours and ways of using language, seem from the perspective of Taken In Hand a bit too rigid, rule-bound and formulaic. BDSM relationships look too static and somehow artificial to me with my Taken In Hand inclinations. Taken In Hand readers simply don't find BDSM literature and ideas erotic even though they are more than willing to admit that they do find Taken In Hand ideas erotic. BDSM doesn't float the average Taken In

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Hand person's boat. This is in no way to say that BDSM people are in any way inferior or wrong; I am merely pointing out that from a Taken In Hand perspective, there is a *difference*.

[...]

Blanket consent

Blanket consent refers to the idea of giving your husband the freedom to act forcefully and at least in one sense (though not a deeper sense) 'against your will'. I, the owner of this site, find this idea problematic, in that it is often taken to mean giving consent explicitly once, such that the other person may rely on that consent for ever more, irrespective of anything the person who gave the blanket consent may then say. To me, consent is vital, and the idea of blanket consent—at least as posters sometimes express it here—seems to allow for real non-consent. To my mind, consent is important in the moment, on an on-going basis. I do not mean that there must be explicit consent, but the person must be consenting psychologically, as opposed to distressed. The abused wife who refuses to leave her husband is distressed and would prefer her husband not to abuse her. She is *not* consenting in the important psychological sense, even if she refuses to leave him, even if she *says* she consents. But a Taken In Hand wife (who some might mistakenly think is being abused) is not only not distressed but is psychologically deeply consenting and would hate it if her bossy husband were to start deferring to her or if he were to stop be-

ing in charge. The psychological state of the Taken In Hand wife is neither the same as that of the abused wife (who is *not* consenting)—and nor is it the same as some mentally disturbed submissive women, who really aren't consenting to everything they are subjected to, but whose psychological autonomy is too fractured for them to assert themselves. They submit not in joy and delight but in pain and distress. This is not genuine consent, however much they may say that it is. This is disturbed vulnerable individuals being further harmed. If it wounds you—if it makes you feel distressed—you are not genuinely consenting, and no good can come of it. The idea of blanket consent does not capture all this, so I think it is a bad term to use.

D/s

D/s or Ds (not to be confused with Taken In Hand) is about dominance and submission and means different things to different people. It may or may not involve a relationship, and a D/s relationship may or may not be sexually exclusive one (unlike Taken In Hand, which assumes a wholehearted, sexually exclusive, fully-committed, permanent marriage). It can be all about the dominant partner, the submissive partner(s) being expected to serve and service the dominant partner's every whim. D/s relationships sometimes fall into the mistake of the dominant partner being so self-absorbed that it harms the submissive partner(s). (Taken In Hand is not all about the man, it is for *both*, and whilst the

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husband is in charge, *both* try to please the other, as opposed to one doing all the giving and the other doing all the receiving. Moreover, in a Taken In Hand relationship, because the husband has power over his wife, he takes special care always to put his wife and their relationship first. This is the key to being in charge in a good, healthy and sustainable way.)

DD (Domestic Discipline)

DD (domestic discipline) refers to spanking and/or other forms of “discipline” (such as corner time, writing lines, etc) used, usually in a relationship though not necessarily, as “punishment” for “infractions” of “rules”. This thrills and excites the partners but they often swear blind that there is no erotic element. DD relationships often fall into the problem of the spanker being burdened with taking responsibility for the behaviour of the spankee, who can in some cases be very high-maintenance, narcissistic and self-absorbed. (By contrast, Taken In Hand is not all about the woman, it is for both wife *and* husband, and while some Taken In Hand relationships do involve physical force, Taken In Hand wives absolutely take responsibility for their own actions, and strive to please their husband rather than making his life a misery with endless high-maintenance demands.)

Discipline

(Not necessarily anything to do with Taken In Hand, note.) Discipline, in this context, refers to “dis-

cipline” used in a consensual relationship, NOT to anything *really* non-consensual. This is not about abuse. If you ask the person whether she would REALLY prefer not to be disciplined, she would say “No! I prefer this kind of relationship. I love it that he feels able to take this action! I do NOT want him not to discipline me!” She might say that it is against her will at the time it happens, but if anyone were to try to get her to leave her partner, she would be thinking, “What?! Are you CRAZY?! This is the kind of relationship I’ve always DREAMED of! No WAY am I leaving!” and she would NOT be happy if you were to succeed in persuading her husband or boyfriend to desist from this “discipline”. Some readers may get the impression that the discipline is not consensual, because some people draw a distinction between “erotic discipline” and “non-erotic discipline”. In my view, “non-erotic discipline” refers to discipline which appears to be against the person’s will in the moment it happens, but which that person wants at a deeper level, such that without it, she would feel that there is something missing, or she would not be so attracted to and excited by her husband, etc. For some women, this helps them feel relaxed and safe. They need to know that their man will not let them ill-treat him or otherwise behave badly. Note that “discipline” is not a part of most Taken In Hand relationships. I mention this term simply because some readers (particularly DD folk) mention it here, and I want to stress the con-

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sensual nature of what they are referring to.

head of the household

HOH stands for “Head of the Household”; HOR stands for “Head of the Relationship”. They refer to a relationship structure in which one partner, usually the man, is deemed by both partners to be in charge. Again, this can mean different things to different people. In some cases, it means that he makes all the decisions; in others, it means that he is the final arbiter if there is a dispute; in others, it means simply that he leads slightly in some areas of their relationship. It might be quite obvious that the man is the master, or it might be quite subtle and not obvious. It might just mean that the man “wears the trousers” in some sense. Again, not all Taken In Hand couples identify with the HoH idea. I mention this term simply because some posters use it here.

M/s

(Again, nothing to do with Taken In Hand.) M/s refers to the “master/slave” relationship, in which one person is owned by the other, either with all that that implies, in the case of an absolute power relationship, or in a more superficial sense.

Masochism

Masochism is the psychological tendency to derive pleasure, often including sexual pleasure, from emotional or physical pain. Please note that Taken In Hand is not about masochism. In her book, *Masochism: A Jungian View*, Lyn Cowan brilliant-

ly describes masochism this way: “Masochism is an art of holding oneself in oppositional extremity. The masochist sees himself living—appears to live—in *extremis*, at the very edge of danger, madness, death. A masochist's pleasure is extremely painful and his pain, extremely pleasurable. Often opposite feelings like pride and humiliation are present simultaneously, both torturous, both pleasurable. In the midst of such emotional extremity, the need and feeding of the masochistic compulsion is clearly, itself, part of the torture and pleasure. There is pride in this cliff-hanging extremity, in maintaining these impossible oppositions without plunging over the edge. It is an extreme pride, a pride of extremity, of going to extremes and surviving. It is a pride of promethean proportions.” (page 92)

OTK

OTK stands for “over the knee” and refers to putting your wife over your knee and spanking her. Not a Taken In Hand thing, but the term is sometimes used by DD folk on this site nevertheless.

SM (sadomasochism)

SM (sadomasochism) is a psychological tendency to derive sexual pleasure from getting or giving emotional and/or physical pain. Sadomasochistic relationships and interactions are often intense. Fictional examples—rather unhealthy ones—can be found in *The Night Porter* and possibly *Naboer*. Please note that Taken In Hand is not SM.

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Service kink

The service kink is a need to serve that amounts to, or is related to, an erotic preference. This has absolutely nothing to do with Taken In Hand. Some authorities (such as Pat Allen) argue that it is the masculine leader who serves the woman he leads, and the feminine woman in or desiring a male-led relationship who receives his service.

Submission

Submission can mean many different things, most not consistent with a Taken In Hand relationship. As you will see if you take the Taken In Hand tour, Taken In Hand woman generally do not claim to be submissive. They do, however, enjoy being firmly kept in line by their husband, and they do positively want him to be in charge.

TPE

TPE stands for "total power exchange" and depending upon which source you read, it implies that one

person completely controls another in a long-term relationship. Also known as an "absolute power relationship" it is what both parties want. TPE relationships are usually considered the hardcore, extreme end of BDSM. Some BDSM websites describe this as the ultimate dominant-submissive relationship; others say that it is merely a distant aim and not something they think they can actually achieve. Paradoxically, perhaps, some descriptions of TPE/AP relationships sound much more like a Taken In Hand relationship than you might expect if you think of TPE as extreme BDSM. Taken In Hand can sound boringly conservative and conventional to anyone with a penchant for some of the more elaborate, painful, ritualistic, theatrical, humiliating BDSM practices, but it is hardcore and extreme to anyone who doesn't like the idea of the man's control not being confined to set scenes and times. Perhaps TPE is where Taken In Hand meets BDSM.²

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These quotations are not intended to constitute advice, an argument, or evidence for or against anything. This section is just a bit of fun! Please don't take it too seriously! That a quote is included here should not be taken to imply that it is endorsed, and it certainly should not be taken to imply that the source of the quote is endorsed.

"Submissive men are much more likely than men with dominating personalities to become impotent as they get older. ... By the end of the 10-year study, 163 men, or 21 percent, reported developing mild or

serious erectile dysfunction. Not surprisingly, men with high blood pressure, those who smoked and those who were obese were more likely to develop ED. But even after accounting for those risk factors,

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men who scored low on scales of dominance were about 60 percent more likely than their assertive counterparts to report erection problems, the researchers found." - Adam Marcus

"A beauty is a woman you notice; a charmer is one who notices you." - Adlai Stevenson: *The Stevenson Wit* (1966)

"'You see, a man doesn't want to feel that a woman cares more for him than he does for her'. His voice grew warm as he went on 'He doesn't want to feel *owned*, body and soul. It's the damned *possessive* attitude! This man is *mine*—he *belongs* to me! That's the sort of thing I can't stick—no man could stick! He wants to own his woman; he doesn't want *her* to own *him*.'" - Agatha Christie: *Death on the Nile*, Chapter six

"But marriage means more than a lover—I take an old-fashioned view that respect is necessary. Respect—which is not to be confused with admiration. To feel admiration for a man all through one's married life would, I think, be excessively tedious. You would get, as it were, a mental crick in the neck. But respect is a thing that you don't have to think about, that you know thankfully is there. As the old Irish woman said of her husband 'Himself is a good head to me.' That, I think, is what a woman needs. She wants to feel that in her man there is integrity, that she can depend on him and respect his judgement, and that when there is a difficult decision to be made it can safely be left in his hands." - Agatha Christie: *An Auto-*

biography, Part One, Chapter Five, page 64 of the HarperCollins paperback edition

"The position of women over the years has definitely changed for the worse. We women have behaved like mugs. We have clamoured to be allowed to work as men work. Men, not being fools, have taken kindly to the idea. Why support a wife? What's wrong with a wife supporting herself? She wants to do it. By golly, she can go on doing it!

"It seems sad that having established ourselves so cleverly as 'the weaker sex' we should now be broadly on a par with the women of primitive tribes who toil in the fields all day, walk miles to gather camelthorn for fuel, and on trek carry all the pots, pans, household equipment on their heads, while the gorgeous ornamental male sweeps on ahead, unburdened save for one lethal weapon with which to defend his women.

"You've got to hand it to Victorian women: they got their menfolk where they wanted them. They established their frailty, delicacy and sensibility—their constant need of being protected and cherished. Did they lead miserable, servile lives, downtrodden and oppressed? Such is not my recollection of them. All my grandmothers' friends seem to me in retrospect singularly resilient and almost invariably successful in getting their own way. They were tough, self-willed and remarkably well-read and well-informed.

"Mind you, they admired their men enormously. They genuinely thought men were splendid fel-

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lows—dashing, inclined to be wicked, easily led astray. In daily life a woman got her own way whilst paying due lipservice to male superiority, so that her husband should not lose face.

“Your father knows best, dear,” was the public formula. The real approach came privately. ‘I’m sure you are quite right in what you said, John, but I wonder if you have considered...’

“In one respect man was paramount. He was the Head of the House. A woman, when she married, accepted as her destiny his place in the world and his way of life. That seems to me sound sense and the foundation of happiness. If you can’t face your man’s way of life, don’t take that job—in other words, don’t marry that man. Here, say is a wholesale draper: he is a Roman Catholic: he prefers to live in a suburb: he plays golf and he likes to go for holidays by the seaside. That is what you are marrying. Make up your mind to it and like it. It won’t be so difficult.” - Agatha Christie: *An Autobiography*, Part Three, Chapter Two, page 134 of the HarperCollins paperback edition.

“Mon ami, let this be a lesson to you. You are a man. Behave, then, like a man! It is against Nature for a man to grovel. Women and Nature have almost exactly the same reactions! Remember it is better to take the largest plate within reach and fling it at a woman’s head than it is to wriggle like a worm whenever she looks at you!” - Agatha Christie: *Murder in Mesopotamia*, chapter XXVII

“Never adopt an apologetic attitude with a woman. She will take you at your own valuation—and you deserve it. The humble spirit, dear sir, is a wash-out in matrimony! No woman can be expected to stand up against it.” - Agatha Christie: The case of the discontented husband, in *Parker Pyne Investigates*

“Some women ... actually thrill to the threat of physical violence. I’ve never met one that does, mind you, but they probably do exist. In books. By men.” - Alan Ayckbourn: *Round and Round the Garden*

“Sure, you can be a romantic today if you so choose, but it is a little like being a virgin in a whorehouse. It just doesn’t fit with the temper of the times and gets no support in the current atmosphere.” - Allan Bloom: *Love and Friendship*, page 25

“In family questions, inasmuch as men were understood to be so strongly motivated by property, an older wisdom tried to attach concern for the family to that motive: the man was allowed and encouraged to regard his family as his property, so he would care for the former as he would instinctively care for the latter... When wives and children come to the husband and father and say, ‘We are not your property; we are ends in ourselves and demand to be treated as such,’ the anonymous observer cannot help being impressed. But the difficulty comes when wives and children further demand that the man continue to care for them as before... The father will almost inevitably constrict his quest for property, cease being a father and become a mere man

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again... The hope is to have a happy city made up entirely of unhappy men...

"I am not arguing here that the old family arrangements were good or that we should or could go back to them. I am only insisting that we not cloud our vision to such an extent that we believe that there are viable substitutes for them just because we want or need them. The peculiar attachment of mothers for their children existed, and in some degree still exists, whether it was the product of nature or nurture. That fathers should have exactly the same kind of attachment is much less evident. We can insist on it, but if nature does not cooperate, all our efforts will have been in vain. Biology forces women to take maternity leaves. Law can enjoin men to take paternity leaves, but it cannot make them have the desired sentiments." - Allan Bloom: *The Closing of the American Mind* page 130

"I do not want to be the leader. I refuse to be the leader. I want to live darkly and richly in my femaleness. I want a man lying over me, always over me. His will, his pleasure, his desire, his life, his work, his sexuality the touchstone, the command, my pivot. I don't mind working, holding my ground intellectually, artistically; but as a woman, oh, God, as a woman I want to be dominated. I don't mind being told to stand on my own feet, not to cling—all that I am capable of doing—but I am going to be pursued, fucked, possessed by the will of a male at his time, his bidding." - Anaïs Nin: *Incest*

"I, with a deeper instinct, choose a man who compels my strength, who makes enormous demands on me, who does not doubt my courage or my toughness, who does not believe me naïve or innocent, who has the courage to treat me like a woman." - Anaïs Nin [Where did she write this? If anyone can provide the full reference for this quotation, I'd appreciate it.]

"It takes courage to push yourself to places that you have never been before ... to test your limits ... to break through barriers. And the day came when the risk it took to remain tight inside the bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom." - Anaïs Nin [Where did she write this? If anyone can provide the full reference for this quotation, I'd appreciate it.]

"Getting fucked and being owned are inseparably the same." - Andrea Dworkin: *Intercourse* (1987)

"If men have a right to rape women in marriage—even an implicit right, because juries will not convict—yes, then men do own women." - Andrea Dworkin: *Life and Death*

"[I]n these politically-correct times where most women would not dare to admit openly—even to their close female friends—that they enjoy being dominated—heterosexual women who do enjoy being dominated are intimidated into silence." - Angry Harry: *Intercourse*

"Feminist analysis begins with the principle that objective reality is a myth." - Ann Scales, feminist legal scholar, in the *Yale Law School Review*, c. 1990

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“‘Consent’ [is] the act of willingly and verbally agreeing to engage in specific sexual contact or conduct... Verbal consent should be obtained with each new level of physical and/or sexual contact/conduct in any given interaction, regardless of who initiates it. Asking, ‘Do you want to have sex with me?’ is not enough. The request for consent must be specific to each act.” - Antioch College Date Rape Code, 1993

“‘Men have forgotten this truth,’ said the fox. ‘But you must not forget it. You become responsible, forever, for what you have tamed.’” - Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: *The Little Prince*, page 103

“Man is active, full of movement, creative in politics, business and culture. The male shapes and moulds society and the world. Woman, on the other hand, is passive. She stays at home, as is her nature. She is matter waiting to be formed by the active male principle. Of course the active elements are always higher on any scale, and more divine. Man consequently plays a major part in reproduction; the woman is merely the passive incubator of his seed.” - Aristotle: *The Politics*, Book I

“The male is by nature superior and the female inferior; one rules and the other is ruled.” - Aristotle: *The Politics*, Book I

“Men's courage is shown in commanding and women's in obeying.” - Aristotle: *The Politics*, Book I

“The male is naturally more fitted to command than the female (except where there is a miscarriage of nature).” - Aristotle: *The Politics*, Book I

“I am of the firm belief that in sexless marriages, the spouse who denies sex is cheating the other out of their marriage agreement. I use the word ‘cheating’ quite purposely and see it as minimally different from an ‘affair.’ The marriage agreement is one of mutual sexual exclusivity and meeting each other’s sexual needs. A spouse who goes outside the relationship for sex denies the cheated on spouse their half of the marriage agreement. A spouse who denies the other reasonable sexual access cheats the other out of their half of the marriage agreement. Either way the marriage is under enormous difficulty.” - Athol Kay: *The Married Man Sex Life Primer 2011*, A Sexless Marriage Cheats You, page 79

“The majority of drama queens are just seeking the king to finally show up and tell her to knock it off.” - Athol Kay: *The Married Man Sex Life Primer 2011*, Unlearning that Being Male and Dominant is Evil, page 124

“My realization is that most wives want the First Officer job. Not Crewman Third Class, but not Captain either. They want to have a say and be heard, they want to be trusted, they don’t want to be micro managed on decisions they are capable of making themselves, they can happily step it up into ‘having the bridge’ when their husbands aren’t available. They just would rather be the second in command and follow someone else’s leadership and general direction. [...]

“Husbands shouldn’t go into marriage and attempt to simply be a member of the crew. If the husband is lazy and declines to fulfill the

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Captain position, the wife will likely try and assume a First Officer role. But if she takes the First Officer role with an endlessly off duty Captain, that will make her the de facto Captain. That's going to piss her off. He can even do everything she wants and asks him to do, but by submitting to her perfectly, that can actually anger and disappoint her more and more." - Athol Kay: *The Married Man Sex Life Primer* 2011, Wives want to be the First Officer, page 127

"A married woman's as old as her husband makes her feel." - Sir Arthur Wing Pinero, 1855-1934

"Those who love deeply never grow old; they may die of old age, but they die young." - Sir Arthur Wing Pinero: *In Love*, 1855-1934

"The ideal man has the strength, endurance, and temperance of fine steel. [...] A man of steel is a masculine man. He is aggressive, determined, decisive, and independent. He learns efficiency in the affairs of a man's world, demanding quotas of himself in reaching an objective. He is competent in a task, fearless and courageous in the face of difficulty, and master of a situation. The velvet qualities include a man's gentleness, his tenderness, kindness, generosity, and patience... He is chivalrous, attentive and respectful to the gentler sex and has an ability to love with tenderness. He has, in addition, an enthusiastic and youthful attitude of optimism which defies the press of years. [...] Both the steel and velvet are necessary to produce a great character. There has never been a truly great man on the earth who was not a possessor of both." - Au-

brey Andelin: Chapter 1, *Man of Steel and Velvet*

"When a man has both Steel and Velvet qualities, It brings him peace, happiness and fulfillment" - Aubrey Andelin: *Man of Steel and Velvet*, Chapter 2

"A woman loves only her master." - Aubrey Andelin: *Man of Steel and Velvet*

"Une femme n'aime que son maître." - French translation of the above quote by Aubrey Andelin: *Man of Steel and Velvet*

"Love is not self-sacrifice, but the most profound assertion of your own needs and values. It is for your *own* happiness that you need the person you love, and that is the greatest compliment, the greatest tribute you can pay to that person." - Ayn Rand: in an interview in *Playboy* in the 1960s

"[S]ex is one of the most important aspects of a man's life and, therefore, must never be approached lightly or casually. A sexual relationship is proper only on the ground of the highest values one can find as a human being. ... And that is why I consider promiscuity immoral. Not because sex is evil, but because sex is too good and too important." - Ayn Rand: in an interview in *Playboy* in the 1960s

"For a woman *qua* woman, the essence of femininity is hero-worship—the desire to look up to man. 'To look up' does not mean dependence, obedience, or anything implying inferiority. It means an intense kind of admiration; and admiration is an emotion that can be experienced only by a person of

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strong character and independent value-judgements. A 'clinging vine' type of woman is not an admirer but an exploiter of men. Hero-worship is a demanding virtue: a woman has to be worthy of it and the hero she worships. Intellectually and morally, i.e., as a human being, she has to be his equal; then the object of her worship is specifically his *masculinity*, not any human virtue she might lack." - Ayn Rand: *The Objectivist*, December 1968

"[A] properly feminine woman does not treat men as if she were their pal, sister, mother—or *leader*." - Ayn Rand: *The Objectivist*, December 1968

"[Sex is] an act which is not possible in self-abasement, only in self-exaltation, only in the confidence of being desired and being worthy of desire." - Ayn Rand's character, Francisco D' Aconia: *Atlas Shrugged*³

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"I always had this suppressed "old-fashioned" feeling that the husband should be the head of the household and that he should be responsible in all matters, including caring for his wife's needs. I was afraid that what happened to my parents would happen to us unless something was done to correct the situation; but I didn't know how to broach the idea that I felt that *I should* be in charge of the household without provoking a row!" - Baltazar

"[E]ven when women possess the agentic quality of dominance consistent with the leader role, the incongruence between masculinized task demands and gender stereotypes mitigate against women's leadership emergence." - Barbara A. Ritter and Janice D. Yoder: Abstract, *Gender Differences In Leader Emergence Persist Even For Dominant Women: An Updated Confirmation Of Role Congruity Theory (Psychology of Women Quarterly, Volume 28 Issue 3 Page 187 —September 2004)*

"Any woman relating to a man cannot be a feminist. ... I personally am going to keep my distance from men and straight women." - Barbara Solomon: "Taking the bullshit by the horns", in *The Furies*, March-April 1972, and in *Lesbianism and the women's movement*).

"My wife laughs like a drain to think what some of her more starchy colleagues would think if they knew we had this delicious relationship." - Ben

"Love well, whip well." - Benjamin Franklin: *Poor Richard*

"It is better for a woman to compete impersonally in society, as men do, than to compete for dominance in her own home with her husband..." - Betty Friedan

"Wives, submit yourself unto your own husbands, as is fit in the Lord." - *The Bible: Colossians 3:18*

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." - *The Bible: Genesis 2:24*

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"[T]hy desire shall be for thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." - *The Bible*: Genesis 3:16

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." - *The Bible*: Ephesians 5:22-25

"[L]et every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband." - *The Bible*: Ephesians 5:33

"[W]ives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear." - *The Bible*: 1 Peter 3:1-2

"For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement." - *The Bible*: 1 Peter 3:5-6

"[H]usbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered." - *The Bible*: 1 Peter 3:7

"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a

woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." - *The Bible*: 1 Timothy: 2:11-12

"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." - *The Bible*: 1 Corinthians 14:34

"If I feel I can't live with something, then it's arranged until I can. This is about being happy, for both of us. Gary has a fantasy of having me submissive full time. I will happily go with this until it feel uncomfortable or it is something I cannot live with. But as it is right now, I can live with this. It is very, very hot." - Blush

"I made a personal decision to just go ahead and be submissive. [...] It was freeing and peaceful to just let go and trust him. [My husband] pointed out [that] he's dominant and I'm submissive... (I cook his favourites; I perform any small errands he needs me to do; I rarely, if ever, deny him sex, etc.) And he went on to describe our marriage as a ship: he's the captain and I'm first mate... And if the first mate doesn't carry out the orders of the captain then it's hard to keep the ship sailing. Similarly, if the captain doesn't listen to the first mate about the situations on the ship, he can't issue any orders effectively." - Bonnie

"Woman must be put back in her place. Man's great error was to put woman on a pedestal, when she is far more at ease on her knees—

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where she belongs. ... Woman must be reacquainted with truth and force. She must be reacquainted with truth through force. ... She must be shown in no uncertain terms the absolute nature of the master/slave relationship endemic to the sexes." - Boyd Rice: *The Revolt Against Penis Envy Contributing Toward an Understanding of Male/Female Harmony*, published in Answer Me!

"Fear commands respect, and pain demands understanding (read: compliance). Rape is the act by which fear and pain are united in love." - Boyd Rice: *ibid.*

"Don't give her power. She doesn't know how to handle it. Women ... need to be tamed. Keep her chained down. Break the chain and watch

her walk all over you. And you deserve it. Because you gave away your power for free. Women say they're looking for nice guys, but they don't respect passive pussy men. Women want their lovers to be killers." - The Boyd Rice Experience: Hatesville

"No two couples will be exactly alike. And there's no magic formula that you can follow and have guaranteed success. You just have to talk, listen, and talk some more until you understand each other, and then work hard to please each other." - Brandy

"A gentleman is someone who raises his hat before he beats his wife." - British joke (ca. 1920)⁴

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"Whiffle [whine and wheeze and snuff and sniffle]: The annoying scratchy sound made by weepy feminists as they lament the sufferings of women and, houndlike, sniff out evidence of male oppression." - Camille Paglia

"You have to accept the fact that part of the sizzle of sex comes from the danger of sex. That you can be overpowered." - Camille Paglia

"Feminists, seeking to drive the power relations out of sex, have set themselves against nature." - Camille Paglia, *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson*, 13, 2.

"I grew up in a time when men believed that they had a right to expect obedience from their wives. That notion was repulsive me. I swore

that I would never treat a woman as anything less than, or other than, my equal. Now, after being married to a feminist for twenty-plus years, I am confronted by a woman who wants me to be stronger than her and who has actually said that "love, honor and obey" is a comfortable thing for her. Being a dominant husband is something I never planned to do." - CarlF

"What in the liberal view looks like love and romance looks a lot like hatred and torture to the feminist." - Catherine MacKinnon: *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State*, 1989

"What is sexual is what gives a man an erection... If there is no inequality, no violation, no dominance,

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no force, there is no sexual arousal."

- Catherine MacKinnon

"Woman is a violent and uncontrolled animal, and it is useless to let go the reins and then expect her not to kick over the traces. You must keep her on a tight rein . . . Women want total freedom or rather—to call things by their names—total licence. If you allow them to achieve complete equality with men, do you think they will be easier to live with? Not at all. Once they have achieved equality, they will be your masters . . ." - Cato the Elder 234-149 B.C., quoted in Livy's *History of Rome*

"Women today are not satisfied. . . They want men, but all they find are little boys." - Charles Manson

"If you're going to be intimate with someone, it shouldn't be for ANY reason other than it's what *you* want & what *you're* comfortable with. You do *not* owe someone sex because he took you out to dinner or whatever. You don't owe him sex just because he's taken you out on '6 dates over a 3 week period,' or any other number of dates over any other period of time. Yes, I know that some men feel this way, & a few men I've dated in my life have tried to 'guilt' me into bed on a similar basis. It undoubtedly works for them at times, particularly with women who have self-esteem issues, & being so anxious to keep a relationship continuing that you'd have sex with someone when you're not really comfortable doing so tells you two things, at least: (a) you do have self-esteem issues & (b) he cares much more about himself than he does you or a potential relationship

with you (generic 'you')." - Charlotte

"When you see your wife commit an offence, do not rush at her with insults and violent blows: rather, first correct the wrong lovingly and pleasantly, and sweetly teach her not to do it again... and if this ... doesn't work, take up a stick and beat her soundly." - Friar Cherubino Da Siena: *Rules of Marriage* (1489)

"A bride received into the home is like a horse that you have just bought: you break her in by constantly mounting her and by continually beating her." - Chinese proverb

"I love men, not because they are men but because they are not women." - Queen Christiana (of Sweden) 1626-89

"To the uninitiated and uninformed, submission can imply that a person has no power or self-esteem. I can assure you that that is not the case. . . My lack of power... makes me feel fantastically powerful; my power is an important part of who I am and what I am." - Claudia Varrin: *Erotic Surrender: The Sensual Joys of Female Submission*

"Women do not find it difficult nowadays to behave like men; but they often find it extremely difficult to behave like gentlemen." - Sir Compton Mackenzie 1883-1972: *On Moral Courage*

"It is a law of nature that women should be held under the dominance of man." - Confucius (ca. 500 BC)

"Most people in Taken In Hand relationships would not dream of shoving their lifestyle down another's throat as "the one true way"." - ConfusedoffHomeCounties

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"Abraham Maslow... spent some time studying dominance in women. ... He questioned a large number of women and soon learned that they fell into three 'dominance groups' – high, medium and low. The high dominance women were, as you might expect, precisely five per cent of the total. Sexually, they were inclined to promiscuity and experimentation—many had had lesbian experiences or tried sadomasochism. They liked males of even higher dominance, and regarded the male sexual organ as beautiful.

"Medium dominance women, the largest group, were basically romantics. They liked the kind of men who would take them to restaurants with candlelight and give them flowers. They were looking for Mr Right. They were capable of a certain amount of promiscuity, but it was essentially a second best—what they really wanted was a husband who was a good father and provider. They also wanted him to be slightly more dominant than they were, but not too dominant. Very high dominance males scared them. This

group didn't have any strong feelings about the male organ.

"Low dominance women didn't much like sex. They liked the kind of man who would admire them from a distance for years without daring to say so. They were terrified of high dominance males, and thought the male organ downright ugly.

"But all three groups needed a male who was more dominant than themselves. One very high dominance woman searched for years for such a male and when she found him she was finally happy. But he wasn't quite dominant enough, and so she used to provoke quarrels that would end with him slapping her about, hurling her on a bed, and raping her. These sexual experiences she found most satisfactory of all." - Colin Wilson, pages 27-28 in the introduction to *The Gates of Janus* by Ian Brady

"Most women have small waists the world throughout, But their desires are a thousand miles about." - Cyril Tourneur: *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1607)⁵

QUOTATIONS: D

"Women are driven to emasculate men, but they do so always hoping you will stand up for yourself." - Dan McDonley: *The Nice Guy*

"Regain your masculinity. The first way to do that is stop asking permission to want what you want and to pursue what you want. Leave room for taking a step backwards and understanding when you shouldn't go further (once you've

failed to push forward a few times). Be a man though! Stop waiting for PERMISSION to go forward. This applies to approaching, escalating, even in your own life and work. Admiral Grace Hopper said, 'It is better to ask forgiveness than permission.'" - Dan McDonley: *Per-Missionary Position*

"My husband doesn't know about Taken in Hand, but this site evident-

QUOTATIONS

ly knows him, and men like him, because it describes him intimately—a man who leads, and a woman who follows because he's worthy of her admiration. But men aren't supposed to lead anymore, and women aren't supposed to want that anymore." - Dandelion

"As women have become more masculine in their psychological signals (ie their behaviour and the things they say) men have become less psychologically attracted to them (ie romantic love). [...] Of course, the converse can also be true: as many men have become more feminine in their style, and often apparently less psychologically strong, and not as high-earning in their career as the woman, many women are also less attracted to them. Given that today's women are rowdy, man-bashing, [... and] forever reminding us of their strength and independence etc, we are now less and less likely to feel the spiritual/psychological attraction which leads to romantic love and then oftentimes commitment. So, by and large, all that is left is the physical attraction to the woman's body. i.e. Sex" - Darren Blacksmith: *Feminism and the death of romantic love*

"[A visit to a sex emporium in New York, I was left with the] overwhelming feeling... of the commercial exploitation of male sexual desire. There it is, embarrassingly desperate, tormented, demeaning itself, taking any substitute and *paying* for it. Men who live for this are suckers, and their uncomfortable demeanor shows they know it." - Deirdre English: "The Politics of

Porn," *Mother Jones*, vol. 5, no. 3, April 1980, p. 43

"I was far more successful before I picked up *The Game*, and it was because I was fine with who I was. The PUA marketers (and you've been very diplomatic in not naming the worst offenders) make a mint by trying to spread insecurity in guys. Even their emails can make a guy feel insecure if he's not in the right place.

"Just today I was chatting to an American guy in Prague who made comments about being a 'chode' and spoke of his worry about 'Approach Anxiety'. If he'd never read these books, maybe he'd have more chance of just going out there and doing it, instead of worrying about what's 'wrong' with him." - David, in a comment on *Butchering the Alpha Male*, February 12, 2011

"Jewish tradition teaches us that the main reason a woman respects a man is his direction in life. A woman is not impressed with a man who has 'lost his rudder.' A single man interested in getting married should know where he wants to go in life, and what the milestones along the way will be." - Rabbi David Clyman, Does love conquer all?

"There are three simple steps toward the handling of neurotic fear. Each of these steps should be preceded by a deep breath and calm abiding within an image that appeals to you and can relax you. First, admit you feel fear Second, feel the fear fully, i.e., defenselessly, with no escape, with no attempts to get rid of it Third, and most difficult, act as if fear could not stop you." - David Richo: *When Love Meets Fear*

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"Whatever happened to just trying to be a good, stand-up man that people can respect and look-up to? Why are people so caught up with being alpha or nice even. Just be a good guy and do the right thing. Go for what you want but don't be an ass about it and belittle others in the process. By being a dick, you piss other people off and they in turn are dicks to other people, which is why you decided to be a dick in the first place cause it was done to you." - DC, commenting on *Butchering the Alpha Male* by Mark Hanson

"This contract reminds me of letters that Albert Einstein wrote to his wife. Quoting from several news articles from Nov. 1996:

"In one letter, written in 1914, less than two years before Einstein revolutionized science with the publication of his theory of relativity, he tried to impose extraordinary conditions of marriage on his first wife, Mileva. He told her:

"1) You will expect no affection from me and you will not reproach me for this;

"2) You must answer me at once when I speak to you;

"3) You must leave my bedroom or study at once without protesting when I ask you to go;

"4) You will promise not to denigrate me in the eyes of my children, either by word or by deed.

"In another letter, he wrote: 'I treat my wife as an employee whom I cannot fire. I have my own bedroom and avoid being alone with her.'" - Deedealone [Editor's note: if Albert Einstein really did say these things, I'd appreciate the full reference of 20

each quote. Please email us if you can supply this information.]

"In a Taken In Hand relationship, spanking and other means of physical force are not about 'correction' but rather about dominance. That is, it's about *might*—not *right*. A man doesn't have to be right in order to dominate a woman; and if she's right and he's wrong about something, that does not mean that she's dominating him. I might get into a reasoned debate with my dominant man and win, for example; and if he has any integrity as a man then I'd expect him to be willing to admit it when he's proven wrong. But he still has the sheer masculine strength to overpower me in any physical contest—and to me, that's what the dominance aspect is all about." - DeeMarie

"We should work to eradicate male domination from our societal institutions and put it back in the bedroom, where it belongs." - DeeMarie

"Taken In Hand is scandalous and edgy from an egalitarian PC view, and trite and boring from the edges of kink. Too weird and 'old-fashioned' for 'normal' people, and just not weird enough for 'kinky' people." - DeeMarie

"I know it always gets me hot and lusty when a man sits down and carefully 'explains his requirements' to me in detail. (Not.) [Taking her in hand] means being active and taking the reins; taking the initiative and actively controlling her. Not just yakking at her until all the 'requirements' are clarified." - DeeMarie

"I have a very intense preference for the male on top, preferably with

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me on my back. ("Missionary" position, but I would call it 'submissionary' instead.) I would absolutely *hate* being on top. I don't feel submissive there at all; it's just a huge turn-off. If my man insisted that I get on top, I'd probably do that, and then demonstrate just how easy it is for me to slap him in the face from that position. Not a real good idea for him to let me get on top, if he intends to actually dominate me. [...] I realize that we all have slightly different takes on what it means to be 'truly' dominant; but for me the man being on top during sex is the first, foremost, most basic and essential expression of male dominance. Without that, there is no sexual male domination at all." - DeeMarie

"Rules are like women. They are meant to be violated." —Denys Dionne, Quebec Court Justice (1990)

"The audience is seated and physically restrained in front of you. [...] If you have chosen to utilise the imaginary deck for the selection of the card, here is my handling. The spectator sits at your right side. In the left jacket pocket you have an imaginary deck and the torn force index with a large blob of some adhesive substance such as wax or Blu-Tack upon it. Also residing there is some sort of unusual item that the invisible deck will be placed upon later—I use a little spinning disk with a holographic design on it—and an indifferent card, face towards the body. In the left waistcoat pocket one can find the matching entire card, also facing the body. Should you be a female performer and are still unsure what to do, may I suggest that

you read this as a signal that magic is a man's job and that you may be better cut out for a counselling profession or just sitting with friends talking about relationships." - Derren Brown: Pure Effect: direct mind reading and magical artistry (pages 57-58)

"Some women only want/need a small amount of control; others crave deeper control. And that is not implying they want or need to be micromanaged. They want to be controlled where the control is quite literally taken to a physical level. That is just one way it can be done for some." - Desire

"You can show your heart to your woman. Just don't expect her to find it attractive.

"It's a myth that women are attracted to the so-called 'sensitive man'. Emotional availability is a desirable trait, but it does not generate attraction. Women by and large see sensitive, emotional men as weak, feminine and unable to protect them. The last thing a man should do with a woman he's dating is excessive display of emotions, especially fear, anger, frustration, sadness or pain. These are enormous attraction killers in the embryonic stages of a relationship. A woman does not want to give emotional support to a man unless he is her husband. Even then when she gives that emotional support, don't expect there to be attraction while she does it." - Deti

"Traits women find desirable tend to be loyalty, fidelity, honor, steadfastness, kindness and dignity. These are things women want for an LTR and certainly for marriage. But

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try as she might, no woman can talk herself into attraction to such traits....

"Traits women find attractive are confidence, dominance, poise, charisma, and displays of power and authority....

"It's important to remember: first comes attraction, then comes desirability. Without it, the desirable traits are never seen. First the man must be confident and dominant. Then and only then can the woman see the remaining desirable traits." - Deti

"It's important to understand why sluts are not good marriage material... Every time a woman has sex with a man, she bonds to him. I believe this is multifaceted and has biochemical, emotional, psychological and even spiritual components.

"Sex for a woman is penetration. She is taken. She is conquered. She surrenders and allows herself to be penetrated, pierced, impaled. She takes a part of the man's body into hers and absorbs it. The man becomes part of her, physically and emotionally. That penetration reaches her all the way to the essence of her being. Nothing else in the female experience does this to her or for her.

"If she repeats this experience too many times, she continues making bonds with men as she takes them into her and absorbs parts of different men's bodies into hers. At the same time she tries to bond with men she no longer sees (those bonds

keep trying to 'reconnect' to the man she's bonded to), she is forging new bonds.

"I believe that her body, soul and even spirit try to dull or blunt the pain and experience of constant bonding and breaking, bonding and breaking, by preventing the bonding or reducing its effectiveness each time she engages in sex with a new partner. Eventually she becomes unwilling or unable to sense, feel, connect or bond, because the body and soul do all they can to prevent and stunt and relieve the pain and frustration of bonds that are constantly attempting to connect and constantly failing to do so." - Deti

"It's like this, guys: take your woman in hand and you'll never have to do without sex again. Headaches and 'not tonight, I'm too tired' indifference will give way to the ache of desire—hers, for you. Women love it." - DG

"Any punishment that does not correct, that can merely rouse rebellion in whoever has to endure it, is a piece of gratuitous infamy which makes those who impose it more guilty in the eyes of humanity, good sense and reason, nay a hundred times more guilty than the victim on whom the punishment is inflicted." - Marquis Donatien Alphonse François de Sade

"A woman fit to be a man's wife is too good to be his servant." - Dorothy Leigh: *The Mother's Blessing*, 1616⁶

QUOTATIONS: E

"A temporarily submissive female may require a very great effort of will to convince herself, even on the most fleeting and insubstantial level, that a very short man with a squeaky voice who keeps mispronouncing the Words of Power is actually a confident and capable superman, whose jaw is firm, whose word is law, whose intentions are not to be flouted, and whose iron-muscle thighs constitute an altar on which all sins will be washed clean. That it can be achieved at all is probably due to the overmastering qualities of fundamental sexual desires. ('Close your eyes and imagine he's Sean Connery.')

—Edward Anthony: *Thy Rod and Staff*, Chapter 9.

"Marriage must begin with a leaving of all other relationships in order to establish a permanent relationship between one man and one woman."

—Ed Wheat and Gloria Okes Perkins: *Love Life For Every Married Couple*

"Most women . . . enjoy the display of manly force even when it turns against themselves."

—Edward Westermarck: *The Future of Marriage in Western Civilization* (1936)

"A woman, an ass, and a walnut tree, bring the more fruit the more beater they be."

—English proverb (16th Century)

"You may look like a boy and behave like a boy, but you're a girl all the same. And like it or not, girls have got to be taken care of."

—Enid Blyton: *Five Go On a Hike Together*, 1951 (Julian to Georgina)

"Do you want me to tell you something really subversive? Love is eve-

rything it's cracked up to be. That's why people are so cynical about it. It really is worth fighting for, being brave for, risking everything for. And the trouble is, if you don't risk everything, you risk even more."

—Erica Jong

"At times, it is strangely sedative to know the extent of your own powerlessness."

—Erica Jong

"We are now beginning to see the sexiest, strongest, and most empowering part of being submissive: that it can be an expression of strength of character to bow down and surrender to love and passion. This is my idea of feminism."

—Erin Cressida Wilson: *Secretary*, a screenplay (Introduction)

"What is submission exactly? What if submission were not a deviant behavior, but were just another form of sexuality, like homosexuality? What if someone could actually "own" their submissive tendencies and come out as a masochist? After all, there is great power in being weak and in admitting frailty. This is something not often applauded in American culture, but there is a long tradition of this in Catholicism and many Eastern religions. The monks wore thorns on their temples, and the nuns sewed them inside their clothing to show their devotion. The idea of confessing, exposing, stripping, and reducing to the essentials has a long spiritual and sexual tradition. To be punished, to do penance, is something that can be a strength."

—Erin Cressida Wilson: *Secretary*, a screenplay (Introduction)

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"I wished I had died before I ever loved anyone but her." - Ernest Hemingway: *A Moveable Feast*

"He who knocks his wife about thoroughly will be forgiven a hundred sins." - Estonian proverb⁷

QUOTATIONS: F

"It's very unfashionable to say this, but rape isn't actually the worst thing that can happen to a woman if you're safe, alive and unmarked after the event." - Fey Weldon: *Radio Times*, 4 July, 1998

"The draft produced the kind of men that today's girls have never known, and relations between the sexes were better for it. What sticks in my mind about them is their self-sufficiency and competence in fixing things and figuring out solutions to emergencies. Thanks to the draft I belong to the last generation of American women who could scream 'Do something!' and get results. Most of my men were intellectuals but they had been taught in basic training to change a tire in 90 seconds, rig up electrical wiring, tie knots that stayed tied, and take a rifle apart and reassemble it while blindfolded. This last was never necessary in civilian life but it made for a self-assured deftness that was awesome." - Florence King: *Misanthrope's Corner*, the National Review

"The husband hath by law power and dominion over his wife, and may keep her by force, within the bounds of duty, and may beat her, but not in a violent or cruel manner." - Sir Francis Bacon: *Maxims of the law*, 1630

"Whenever a large sample of chaotic elements are taken in hand ... an

unsuspected and most beautiful form of regularity proves to have been latent all along." - Francis Galton, 19th century

"It is only people who possess firmness who can possess true gentleness. In those who appear gentle it is generally only weakness, which is readily converted into harshness.." - Francois de la Rochefoucauld

"The difference between a truly dominant man and a controlling one is that the dominant man needs and wants consent, whereas the controlling man doesn't even understand what this word means." - Frank Nelson

"What is good? All that heightens the feeling of power in man, the will to power, power itself. What is bad? All that is born of weakness. What is happiness? The feeling that power is growing, that resistance is overcome." - Friedrich Nietzsche: *The Antichrist*, part 2

"You go to a woman? Do not forget your whip." - Friedrich Nietzsche: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, XVIII: Old and young women

"When marrying, ask yourself this question: Do you believe that you will be able to converse well with this person into your old age? Everything else in marriage is transitory." - Friedrich Nietzsche: *Human, All Too Human*: No. 406 in the section 'Woman and Child' ('Weib und

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Kind"); the original German version: "*Die Ehe als langes Gespräch* — Man soll sich beim Eingehen einer Ehe die Frage vorlegen: glaubst du, dich mit dieser Frau bis ins Alter hinein gut zu unterhalten? Alles Andere in der Ehe ist transitorisch, aber die meiste Zeit des Verkehrs gehört dem Gespräche an."

"There's nothing we like so much as sentencing girls to be thrashed, and we always give the lads the job of thrashing them. And the girl he has thrashed today, the young man will ask in marriage tomorrow. So it quite suits the girls, too." - Fyodor Dostoyevsky: *The Brothers Karamazov* (1879) Book III: The Sensualists: Chapter 8: Over The Brandy⁸

QUOTATIONS: G

"If you're not a feminist, you're a masochist." - Gloria Steinem

"The cult of masculinity is the basis of every violent, fascist regime. ... We need to raise our sons more like our daughters, with empathy, flexibility, patience and compassion. These so-called feminine qualities are present in men as much as women, and it's a libel on men to say they're not." - Gloria Steinem: speech at the YMCA, Palm Beach County, Fla, in March, 2002

"We are becoming the men we wanted to marry." - Gloria Steinem: In *Ms*, July/August 1982

"I'm all for bringing back the birch, but only between consenting adults." - Gore Vidal, in the *Sunday Times Magazine*, 16 September 1973

"People who have lost relationships often wonder why they can't just let it be "water under the bridge." It is water under the bridge—the trouble is we do not live on the bridge but in the river of life with its many twists and turns." - Grant Fairley⁹

QUOTATIONS: H

"A gentleman is someone who never strikes a woman without provocation." - H. L. Mencken

"From my perspective, intimacy requires mutuality, which means mutual valuing, mutual empowerment, mutual respect, and mutual empathy. A truly intimate relationship fosters the growth of both parties, not just one." - Harriet Lerner: *The Dance of Intimacy*

"No horse gets anywhere until he is harnessed. No stream or gas

drives anything until it is confined. No Niagara is ever turned into light and power until it is tunneled. No life ever grows great until it is focused, dedicated, disciplined." - Harry Emerson Fosdick

"Consensual physical discipline brings the couple together. It is an intimate act, and often leads on to another kind of intimacy. Going into your cave puts up barriers; getting out the wooden spoon breaks down barriers and makes you feel close,

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which then makes it possible to talk with understanding and resolve the issue in a way that is not possible when tempers have flared and you are in fighting mode. So you could say that putting your wife over your knee is a way of getting the fight over and the talking started." - Helen

"Heaven is *not* a mythical place. It can be found right down in the heart of the man who has found the work he loves and the woman he loves." - Helen Rowland: *A Guide to Men*, page 47, 1922

"Being a husband's 'economic equal' may be awfully noble and advanced; but it usually means being all of his ribs and most of his vertebrae." - Helen Rowland: *A Guide to Men*, page 55, 1922

"The rape fantasy reveals itself as only an exaggeration of reality. Acceptance of pain associated with pleasure, or of pleasure associated with pain, may result in such a close connection between the two that the sexual pleasure becomes dependent on pain. Thus feminine sexuality acquires a masochistic character." - Helene Deutsch: *The Psychology of Women*, published by Grune and Stratton, New York (1944) Volume I, Chapter 7, Feminine Masochism, page 277

"Men need to be lovingly received and affirmed. Women need to be possessed and cultivated. This is wholeness." - Henry Makow: *The Effect of Sexual Deprivation on Women*, July 07, 2003

"If you want to get a man's attention, give him power. A man will not sacrifice himself for woman or family unless they belong to him, i.e.

are part of him.[...] Feminists will say I am portraying male tyranny but I am not. A loving man nurtures his wife and wants her to flourish. He consults and tries to please her. [...] To surrender power for love is feminine. When men try to do it, women lose respect. Unconsciously women seek to be overwhelmed by a man." - Henry Makow: *Would You Take a Bullet for a Feminist?*, July 20, 2003

"True strength lies in submission which permits one to dedicate his life, through devotion, to something beyond himself." - Henry Miller [If you know where he said this, please let me know the full reference. — Editor]

"Between husband and wife there is established an affective relationship, which is primordial and excellent, except that in this conjunction the direction belongs to the man, and the submission to the woman." - Hincmar: *On Divorce*

"Force without wisdom falls of its own weight." - Horace: *The Odes*, Roman lyric poet & satirist (65 BC – 8 BC)

"Some of the best forms of control are those that make her feel protected, loved and desirable. My wife loves that kind of control, and she also likes to please me." - Howard Frank

"I've always preferred a women to be feisty and contentious on the road to submission." - Huey

"I've always been more interested in the positive female partner who takes on a "subordinate" role, rather than the one who seems to vapidly fall into it. The "aggressive-

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submissive" is exciting to me." - character in *The Maltese Falcon* Huey (1941)¹⁰

"When you're slapped, you'll take it and like it." - Humphrey Bogart's

QUOTATIONS: I

"Maslow conducted the first American studies on human sexuality, several years before Alfred Kinsey. He interviewed women whom he labeled high dominance and low dominance in sexual preferences.

High Dominance Women

- Unconventional
- Less religious
- Less tolerant of stereotypes
- Extroverted
- Sexually adventuresome
- Less anxious
- Less jealous
- Less neurotic

Low Dominance Women

- Conventional
- Religious
- Conforming to stereotype
- Introverted
- Sexually inhibited
- More neurotic

"Findings: High dominance women were attracted to high dominance men—aggressive, self-confident, highly masculine, self-assured. Low dominance women were attracted to men who were kind, friendly, gentle, faithful and showed a love for children." - I. E. White

"[W]hen you put Ann Romney up against the First Lady, Michelle [Obama] comes out ahead on the Female Social Matrix....

"[H]er personal charisma, unusual beauty, height, and undeniable intelligence make her a personally powerful woman. While arguably less-feminine in presentation than Romney, thanks to her size and style of dress, Michelle's charisma and warmth soften the amazonian image significantly, and she does have quite an engaging smile. In comparison, Ann Romney just doesn't have that same Alpha appeal to men...

"If Ann had been more Alpha in her presentation, and had treated Mitt more like a seething tiger of raw animal lust she could barely restrain herself from attacking at every public appearance, then it would have raised *her* profile and therefore *his* numbers. Treating him like the perfect husband and father is great, politically speaking, but she failed to communicate the subtext that he's hung like a circus pony and does her at every available opportunity....

"As attractive as Ann is... she just doesn't have Michelle's charisma, despite her wholesome charm. She's just not an alpha-enough psychological rival... If Mitt was caught in an affair, ... Ann would be the dutiful but indignant wife, ... tearfully [forgiving] her husband...

"On the other hand, if Barack was ever caught in an affair, there's no doubt in anyone's mind that

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Michelle Obama would be perfectly capable of cutting a bitch. Unrepentantly. She's a visible lioness in her physical presentation, her power and devotion and willingness to mate-guard a tangible symbol of her quality ... and therefore *Barack's* worthiness. She's a well-respected woman who lavishes respect and praise on her man. She shows her passion for him and for their relationship with undisguised enthusiasm." - Ian Ironwood

"Want to know what did attract me [to my wife]? Her social adeptness, her charm, her grace under pressure, her gentle humor ... and the fact that she doesn't try to wave 'strong and confident' around to get attention the way a man does. I don't mind that she's strong and confident, but it isn't a requirement—the way she demonstrates that strength and that confidence, in decidedly feminine ways, is what sets her apart from her career-

monkey single girlfriends. So she gets the prize." - Ian Ironwood, May 15, 2012

"[I]f you are a woman who can't treat a good man with the respect he deserves (assuming he hasn't done something to hurt your feelings, in which case let him have it) then yes, you certainly do need to be taken in hand." - Ilsa Laslow

"For a man, romantic love is worship. He doesn't want to do great things with a woman, he wants to do them for her." - Irma Kurtz: *Malespeak*

"If we had more feminine women there would be less unemployment, divorce, delinquency and other evils." - Isabelle Stayt (of the Campaign for the Feminine Woman) 1983

"As both a good horse and a bad horse heed the spur, so both a good woman and a bad woman need the stick." - Italian proverb¹¹

QUOTATIONS: J

"The number one thing I'm looking for is emotional intimacy. I've had it in the past, and don't want to live without it. It's part of my fundamental make-up to seek deeper ties with those close to me." - James

"The wife is entirely under the power and subjection of her husband." - James Balfour: *The Practiks of Sir James Balfour of Pittendreich* (1550)

"She was still shaking from Grey's alpha-male presence. And the sad part was Jonathan didn't seem to realize just how close he'd come to

being flattened. It was as if all of Jonathan's manly instincts had gotten swallowed up by the sophisticated civilization he'd been living all his life...

"Somewhere along the line Jonathan's male traits had been tamed if not completely repressed by society. How else could two men be so different?

"...and then there was Grey. He had taught her that there was something much more important than living on the cutting edge of exploration technology and modern

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minded men. Grey had made her realize that for all of society's evolution mankind still needed ancient values to survive. Men and women still needed to belong to each other. A commitment, a bond, and the trust of another were still more important than mere coexistence." - Janet Chapman: *Charming the Highlander*

"Beat your wife on the wedding day, and your married life will be happy." - Japanese proverb

"Women, by nature, want to be dominated." - Jayne Mansfield, actress (1933-1967)

"Strength is the sexiest male quality—but of the mind, more than the body." - Jemima Lewis: Dieting is Women's Work, in The Sunday Telegraph, 7th November, 2004.

"The fact is, I prefer men to be slightly caddish and knock me around, and not to love me too much. I like men who think they are God." - Joan Wyndham: *Love Lessons*

"If [a woman] is married, her whole dignity depends upon her being completely subjected, and seeming to be so subjected, to her husband. She has the power to withdraw her freedom, if she could have the will to do so. But that is the very point; she cannot rationally will to be free." - Johann Gottlieb Fichte: *The science of rights* (ca. 1800)

"Among some nations, such as the Persians and Russians, the married women take it as a token of love from their husbands to be soundly beaten. Barclay says of the Russian wives that they estimate the kindness of their husbands from the strokes they give them, and are never more happy than when they have met with a man of barbarous tem-

per. Olearius, that great traveller, denies that he met any such thing; but Barclay confirms it by a very singular instance, which I shall take the liberty of repeating. 'A certain fellow, Jordanes, if his name is of any moment in such a trifle, had travelled from Germany to Muscovy; there he settled and, liking the place, married a wife of the country. He loved the woman very much and, desiring by all means a mutual affection from her, observed her still melancholy, with downcast eyes, often sighing and betraying other signs of a discontented mind. But when her husband enquired the cause of her affliction, affirming that he was not wanting in love and respect,—'Oh,' replies the wife, 'aren't you a fine dissembler of love! D'ye think I don't know how despicable I am to you?' and immediately she fell into a fit of crying and sighing. The man, quite astonished, began to embrace her and ask in what way he had offended her, so that he might make amends in the future. And the woman answered: 'Where are your blows and beatings, the proofs of your love? Sure it is that in this country they are the only proofs we accept.' When Jordanes heard this, his amazement at first hindered his laughter, but soon after, when both were over, he thought it for his interest to use her as she had prescribed, and not long after took an occasion to beat her; and she, growing into good humour by the influence of the cudgel, from that time forward began to love and esteem her husband in earnest.' Petrus Petrus, in his chronicle of Muscovy, tells us the same story with this

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addition, that husbands usually provided whips after their wedding for the same purpose, and reckon them among the household gods." - John Henry Meibomius, *Tractatus de usu flagrorum in re medica et venerea* (A treatise on the use of flogging in medicine and venery)

"Woman in her greatest perfection was made to serve and obey man, not to rule and command him." - John Knox: *First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstous Regiment of Women* (1558)

"How beautiful I must look to him, I thought. And I had sensed his incredible maleness, the animal maleness of him, so different from the thwarted, crippled sexuality so commended and tragically endemic among the males of Earth. For the first time in my life I felt I understood what might be the meaning of the expression 'male,' and as I lay before him, too, dimly, it frightening me, what might be the meaning of the expression 'female.' How beautiful, I thought, I must look to him, lying bound, totally vulnerable, helpless at his feet. How such a sight must stir the splendor of his manhood, to see the female, his, caught, helpless at his feet, his to do with in lust and pleasure, and joy, as he pleased, helpless to escape him, free for him to work his will upon her!" - John Norman: Page 27, *Slave Girl of Gor*

"It is pleasant to take a proud free woman and teach her her womanhood." - John Norman: Page 58, *Vagabonds of Gor*

"There is something about being owned, and belonging to another, which is very meaningful to a wom-

an,' she said. 'It is also, in a way that is hard to make clear to a man, profoundly satisfying.'" - John Norman: Page 312, *Beasts of Gor*

"The whip is good for us,' she said. 'Perhaps it is hard for you to understand that, as you are not a woman. It makes our womanhood a hundred times more meaningful. The essential point here is not being whipped, of course, which hurts, but being subject to the whip, and being truly subject to it. You see the distinction, I am sure.

"We know that men are by nature sovereign over us. That comprehension requires no greater insight. Accordingly, men must then either fulfil their nature, or deny it, and in denying their nature, deny us ours, for ours is the complement to theirs. Accordingly we despise men who surrender their natural sovereignty. Surely, we would not be so stupid, would not be such weaklings and fools as to do that, if we were men. It would be too valuable and too glorious a thing to give up. Its surrender would be a tragedy.

"But we are not men! We are women, and want, truly, with everything in our hearts and bellies, to be women, and we cannot be women truly if men are not truly men! Lay down the whip, and we will attack you, and undermine you, and use your own laws, institutions, and rhetorics to destroy you, inch by inch. Lift it, and we will lick your feet in gratitude.'" - John Norman: Page 157, *Renegades of Gor*

"I don't want a submissive type of person; she just wouldn't suit me. However, I do like to be in charge." - John O, on this site.

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"[W]hen you "submit" to or "dominate" someone in a situation where safe words are used and when limitations are negotiated, you are not actually submitting or dominating at all—you are playing at it." - Jon Jacobs: Jon's Speech, October 8, 1996

"Submissive women run the gamut in aggressiveness from almost completely passive to super-aggressive. They can range from mildly resistant and disobedient, especially in the early period of a relationship, to super-resistant. What all submissive women share has nothing to do with levels of resistance or aggressiveness: it is the simple and profound desire to be controlled, protected, and contained—in a word, dominated." - Jon Jacobs: *An open letter to a dominant man*

"Some wives seem determined to dominate the household and use every trick in the book to make hubby lose face, and unfortunately many of them succeed. A man who loses face at home is bound to reflect his inferior position by his actions, and soon other men on the job begin to treat him with as little consideration as he receives off the job.

"Remember, she may fight you like a tiger to impose her will upon you, but she hopes that you will slap her down either literally or figuratively and will be even more upset if you fail to do so. Don't apply brute force unless you are big enough to take her over your knee and spank her; a black eye may be used as evidence in court, but no woman will expose a reddened bottom to the jury.

"Of course, like Shakespeare, I would teach twenty but fail to follow my own teaching. I have never found it necessary to adopt such violent measures in my own family, but I have seen a lot of wives just spoiling for a spanking. A man must be a leader in his home if he expects to make progress in his activities away from home.

"When you first put a halter on a baby calf and try to teach him to lead, he will buck, plunge and try to tangle your legs in the rope, but once he finds that you stand firm he trots along beside you and seems to enjoy the performance. Leading a family is much the same process, first the wife and then each kid in turn must understand that papa is the ultimate authority. You can spoil a calf by kicking his ribs, but improve his performance by a light switch applied to his tail region, and so is it the way with the human family. Be firm, and if necessary switch them a little, but never lose your temper in the process." - Joseph H. Peck, M.D.: *Life with Women and how to Survive it*, Chapter 8.—Your Own Private Gettysburg

"The question that emerged was this: if masculinity is a contract with the dominant (rape) culture that we had signed as little boys, now that we had gotten to read the fine print and knew damn well that we didn't like what we saw there, could we break the contract?...

"I was clear that I didn't want to rape, even if she didn't call it rape or experience it as rape. ...

"We had already stopped the self-deception of 'reading' our partners' body language and had begun to

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inactivate the objectifying sex-talk and metaphors of the men's locker room that we'd been raised with. Now we began to notice when we were using violent metaphors in non-sexual contexts: 'It strikes me that...', 'He 'blew me away'....', 'It beats me.', 'It wiped me out.', 'We targeted this group.', 'I was going great guns.', 'Give it your best shot.', 'It really hit home.' Rape is first and foremost an act of violence, and each time we unconsciously use a violent or militaristic metaphor, we verbally reproduce an essential part of that act and reinforce the rape culture. ...

"One dramatic example of how the language of safety can be successfully internalized comes from the 1986 Midwest Men's Festival. Sparky T. Rabbit, accompanied by his sign-carrying hand puppet, 'Miss Cow,'

invited participants to practice, as a public call and response, a series of direct expressions ("Miss Cow's Maxims") he'd developed to help reduce the risk of violation in private: "I don't understand!", 'Please explain.', 'What are you doing?', 'What do you mean?', 'Speak for yourself!', 'Please stop!', and the crowd's favorite 'Please continue!' Creating this kind of profoundly personal yet publicly sanctioned language helped protect everyone there, by providing individual men, many of whom lacked communication skills, with language they could use to negotiate their interactions with other men at the Festival." - Joseph Weinberg & Michael Biernbaum: *Coming Home to a World Without Rape*¹²

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"This means so much to me. It means more to me than I know how to articulate, that you're, in a sense, giving me my freedom and my dignity back. Do you remember when you told me that I made you feel like a real woman, that no one else ever has? Well, you make me feel like a real man... and just so you know... no one else *ever* has. ... I'm just head over heels crazy about you... There are not enough adjectives in Webster's to describe my feelings for you." - Ken

"To put it succinctly—the key to surviving—and indeed, even thriving—in marriage 2.0, is to behave and conduct yourself as if you were in marriage 1.0...the old school defi-

nition. You **MUST** wear the pants. You **MUST** be the literal and figurative Head of your household. If you cannot do this, you should indeed go your own way or confine yourself to Gaming women for short term relationships with no commitment.

"Remember: NO woman respects a man she can rule. Any man she can rule, is a man she will have contempt for. Any man she has contempt for, she simply cannot lust. And if she doesn't lust you, she certainly will not 'love' you." - Keoni Galt: *Avoiding the Fate of the AMC*, 14th February 2010

"To me the stick only works when there is sufficient carrot (love, car-

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ing) backing it up, and that takes time and energy and investment on the part of the would be stick wielder. If there isn't sufficient carrot, and my S/O tried to use the stick against me, I might be tempted to take the stick away from him and use it to play 9 innings of nuclear baseball." - Kim: Military Discipline and Romance

"Since domination is an active process, you have to *do* something. You can lead by example, you can encourage through approval, you can discourage through disapproval, you can beat them until they do what you want, you can restrict actions, you can micromanage everything, probably more I can't think of at the moment. It doesn't matter how dominant you feel, or how dominant you look, or how dominant you talk; in the end, you're as dominant as you *do*." - Kor

"Men are in charge of women, because Allah hath made the one of

them to excel the other, and because they spend of their property for the support of women. So good women are the obedient." - *The Koran*, Chapter IV

"If a woman submits to me out of duty, I don't want her. A robot can do a duty, and I have no desire for a robot. A mechanical submission is simply subjugation, and that isn't what any man here would want. This submission must come wholly from the heart. That kind of submission by its very nature demands a love and caring from the man it's given to." - KrosRogue

"Promiscuity starts out fun and exciting, like an addictive drug. And, just like an addictive drug, each taste demands more. Each taste satisfies less. Finally, each taste becomes disgusting, and yet the demand keeps growing." - KrosRogue¹³

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"Beware. I have been generous up until now, but I can be cruel... Everything that you wanted, I have done. You asked that the child be taken, I took him. You cowered before me, I was frightening. I have reordered time, I have turned the world upside down, and I have done it all for you. I'm exhausted from living up to your expectations. Isn't that generous? Stop, wait...look what I'm offering you: your dreams. I ask for so little. Just let me rule you, and you can have everything that you want. Just fear me, love me, do as I say,

and I will be your slave." - Jareth's proposal in *Labyrinth*, a film directed by Jim Henson and starring David Bowie and Jennifer Connelly.

"When I'm with a woman who's highly socially intelligent, I always let her run chick game on me and otherwise test me as a man. Why? Because her social intelligence is a gift and she needs to use her gifts to feel like a woman. Also, it's healthy because I need to be tested as a man in the relationship. Being tested is part of my destiny and provides opportunities for growth. When she

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gets out of line, which she will, I spank her and 'punish' her when we have sex. I want her to get out of line and she wants to be spanked. That zeroes everything out and we're all good. Plus the sex kicks ass.

"From afar what this looks like is that my girlfriend is 'kind of a bitch'. On a scale of 1-10, it's a 3-4 in bitchiness. I've been with women who can't control their gifts and they end up being a 9-10 in bitchiness. That's too much. I drop those chicks. Women who have no bitchiness whatsoever can't be trusted, because she's either repressing her nature or a pushover, neither of which are healthy. Bottom line here is I want a girlfriend who is kind of a bitch and also a sweetheart." - Lance

"I am a person with a great deal of intelligence, intellect, and of course at times arrogance. Which means when I am wrong. I can be spectacularly wrong. I require somebody smart enough to know when I am wrong, strong enough to tell me, and sweet enough to make me like it." - LAR

"We all need a center. For some it is having a partner who is willing to discipline you and be your anchor. For others like me, it is *being* that anchor. It is being needed in that special way and being able to show the person I love in the most direct way possible—I am here, it is OK and I am not going to let you fall. " - LAR

"Keep in mind that you can be intimate with your husband only to the degree that you are willing to show him your soft underbelly, because vulnerability is the part of us that connects with other human be-

ings. Vulnerability is not the same as weakness—it actually takes much more strength and courage to risk emotionally than it does to stay defended." - Laura Doyle: *The Surrendered Wife*

"I sincerely believe that if women studied male lessons in concepts of assertion, courage, destiny, purpose, honor, dreams, endeavor, perseverance, goal orientation, etc., they would have a more fulfilling life, pick better men with whom to be intimate, and have better relationships with them." - Laura Schlessinger: *Ten Stupid Things Women Do to Mess Up Their Lives*

"Everything a woman values most in life can be directly attributed to her husband's penis. [...] Men are as romantic and loving as women are, as sweet and tender and sensitive, but they are also potent sexual beings who need to be loved for the very thing that makes them so. A man's penis is what makes him a man. It gives him the drive and determination that men have, it makes him do the thousand and one little things women find so endearing about men. It makes him strong and courageous, a valiant protector, a fierce defender, a world conqueror and an explorer of brave new worlds. It also makes him gentle when he wants to be. It makes him loving and tender towards the woman who inspires love in him and the children they create together because of it." - Leanne Bell: *His Penis*

"Women who choose not to take their husband's surname after marriage are not sexually attracted to them, and will likely be the one to

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initiate divorce. When a woman feels metaphysically submissive to a man, when she admires all the masculine qualities he exhibits and deems him worthy of submitting to, sexually speaking, she will gladly become "his" and take his name. This is the essence of femininity." - Leanne Bell: *Maiden Names*

"I have always loved men but I never fully appreciated what a wonderful, inspiring, uplifting thing a good man is until I met the finest example of masculinity there is. My husband Dwayne is a constant joy to me, not only for the delight he brings to our marriage and to our life, but for the million, tiny, quiet ways he has of being moral, of being visionary, of smiling at the stars and proving that life is *good*, for the nobility he sees in the beauty around him and his intense desire to paint the world as he knows it can and ought to be. There is no finer man than my husband, and I am privileged he calls me wife." - Leanne Bell: *In Defence of Men*

"[M]arriage as marriage is supposed to be: no opt-out clause, total commitment and an understanding that the woman follows her husband's lead and obeys him." - LifeOfCuriosity

"If you were married in the Biblical sense of the word you would be subject to your husband. You could rightly and properly refer to your husband as "my lord". You could rightly and properly serve him without being servile and defer to him while still being a creature with your own independent ideas, talents and abilities and a realistic expectation that they would not be brushed

aside. You would not be expected to take a masculine role or responsibilities but would be free to be fully a woman. You could rightly and properly receive discipline from your lord and he could punish you or reward you as he thought best. He could lead without ignoring your views, and you could follow without indignity. His could rightly expect to be honoured with your obedience but you could rightly expect to be honoured as his royal companion, not as his dog or dishwasher. Your commitment to his well-being and his commitment to your well-being would be total and no longer negotiable." - LifeOfCuriosity

"If your marriage has gone stale then the first step towards an improvement would be to start treating your spouse as if he (or she) is the most attractive and desirable person in the world. You might not, at this moment, think they are attractive or desirable, you might find the idea ridiculous or even be totally weary with their presence, but your emotional railway carriages will follow the track that your locomotive actions lead them along. Treat your husband or wife as if they are special and in due course your emotional attraction for them will also deepen and broaden." - LifeOfCuriosity

"A person's feelings will follow their actions. P's attraction towards Q depends on what P does for Q, not on what Q does for P. Treat somebody as if you love them and you will come to feel love for them; treat somebody as if you dislike them, and you will come to dislike them." - LifeOfCuriosity

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"I used to think that all submissives want to serve and be used, now I realize that's very untrue." - Liz (emeraldead@ya-hoo.com): Biggest Myths

"[I]t's about who has the ultimate authority, not just who gets to make up 'silly rules.'" - Liz (emeraldead@yahoo.com)

"Dominant individuals are oriented to be fulfilled in a relationship based on them having day to day authority, and submissive individuals are oriented to be fulfilled in a relationship based on them not having day to day authority. And that's not a trait—that's an orientation. A 'dominant orientation' and 'dominant personality' are two totally different things. Orientation is the type of relationship we are fulfilled in. A personality/personality traits is a make-up of how we tend to feel/react as we live in the world. So it is quite common to have a dominant personality but a submissive relationship orientation." - Liz (emeraldead@yahoo.com)

"Oh, how nice it would be to feel serene and submissive and happy *all* the time. But with me the submissiveness never seems to last; it wears off, and then I'm my usual self again. I am a shrew who *can* be tamed, but only on a temporary basis. A sort of Timeshare Taming." - Louise C

"I always felt that my husband loved me more than I loved him. What Taken In Hand seems to have

done for us is even things up a bit." - Louise C

"To write on a subject such as this is to fall headlong into a masochistic venture. [...] I am aware that much of my own psychology emerges, exhibiting itself here and there between periods and paragraphs, exposing itself behind adjectives. This cannot be helped and ought not to be avoided. It is part of masochism—confession, exposure, revealing, stripping, reducing to essentials." - Lyn Cowan: - *Masochism: A Jungian View* (A Confessional Fantasy..., page xi)

"Masochism is an art of holding oneself in oppositional extremity. The masochist sees himself living—appears to live—in *extremis*, at the very edge of danger, madness, death. A masochist's pleasure is extremely painful and his pain, extremely pleasurable. Often opposite feelings like pride and humiliation are present simultaneously, both torturous, both pleasurable. In the midst of such emotional extremity, the need and feeding of the masochistic compulsion is clearly, itself, part of the torture and pleasure. There is pride in this cliff-hanging extremity, in maintaining these impossible oppositions without plunging over the edge. It is an extreme pride, a pride of extremity, of going to extremes and surviving. It is a pride of promethean proportions." - Lyn Cowan: *Masochism: A Jungian View* (page 92)¹⁴

QUOTATIONS: M

"For a man to feel like a man, a masculine man, he needs to do masculine things. It's that simple. He needs to lead, he needs to act, he needs to utilize what he's naturally got to be productive. He wants to be looked up to. He wants to be respected. He wants to be attractive to women (unless he's gay). These things will not be achieved by rejecting masculine behavior." - M3: Chicken or the Egg, December 12, 2012

"[H]e treated me like a woman, which is all I really ask or want. I felt *handled* by him, and this is a good feeling." - Madalyn Murray, in an interview in *Playboy* in the 1960s.

"Poor is the man whose pleasure depends on the permission of another." - Madonna: *Justify My Love*

"[A] man does not want a nagging wife, nor does he want as doormat. He wants one with dignity and opinions and spunk, but one who will leave the final decision to him." - Marabel Morgan: *The Total Woman*, page 84-85

"Now that you are single you will discover yourself clucked over and admonished almost daily by loving relatives to go forth and find a mate who will care for you in the manner to which they would like to see you become accustomed. Toward this end they will provide you with a great deal of guidance, all of which, they will assure, is guaranteed to accomplish this Amazonian task. All of which, they will not admit, you may toss away without so much as a second thought. Few of their suggestions will provide adequate assurance of locating a loving, lucid mate. What your advisers are providing is

advice on how to get a man. Better you should know how not to get a man...especially if you really want one.

"You can't shoulder a rifle and go out and shoot a man. That didn't even work for Calamity Jane, and she was a crack shot. You can't drop a net over one as he passes beneath your window. You can't throw yourself in front of a likely prospect's car, because it's a bit too dramatic, not to mention potentially hazardous to your health. And here are a few more ways you can't get a man: You can't get one with good cooking, kindness, patience, planning, effervescence, or evasiveness. Understated elegance won't do it. Neither will over-inflated measurements. You can't get a man with looks, logic, persuasion, or a one-two punch landed squarely on the jaw.

"Personality, pretty legs, common sense, or conniving—you can't get a man that way either. A new hairdo won't get a man. An old pair of blue jeans won't get him either. (If they are tight they might get him temporarily). You can't get him by being good in bed (although it too might get him temporarily), by batting your eyelashes, puckering your lips, or preparing the world's best bouillabaisse. Being tricky will do you no good. Being tender won't either. You can be sweet or sour, play hard to get or pant like an over-anxious pup. You can have an unsightly pimple or be porcelain-skinned, share his interest in old cars, iron his shirt, scream, shout, coo, cuddle, be as mercurial as the Mad Hatter or as

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serene as a ship under sail. Makes no difference. You can't get a man.

"The reason you can't get a man is quite simple, and it's something your supporters won't tell you. You can't get a man because a man has to get you. And 999 times out of 1,000, a man is not in an acquiring mood. Unfortunate maybe, but that's the way it is. You see it's a big world out there, and there are lots of women for men to love. Not to mention that there has been propaganda to the effect that love today is free.... Although someone eventually winds up paying for it.

"So he either wants you or he doesn't. There's not a whole lot you can do about it. If he does, he'll battle any odds to achieve his goal. If he doesn't, you could be Farrah Fawcett-Majors wrapped in Barbara Hutton's bankbook and he would still turn his back. And that is why, no matter what your friends and anxious relatives imply, you really, absolutely, honestly, cannot get a man." - 'Why You Can't Get A Man' in *The Statue of Liberty is cracking up: A guide to loving, leaving, and living again*, by Marcy Bachmann Wetton and Jan Goldberg Curran (1979)

"The feminists have become far too strident and have done damage to the cause of women by making us out to be something we're not. You get on because you have the right talents. ... I don't notice that I am a woman. I regard myself as the Prime Minister." - Margaret Thatcher, 1980

"The common man believes that in order to be chaste a woman must not be clever: in truth it is doing chastity too little honour to believe it can be

found beautiful only by the blind." - Marie de Jars: *Proumenoir* (1594)

"All men are rapists and that's all they are. They rape us with their eyes, their laws and their codes." - Marilyn French: *The Women's Room*

"[I]'s cheating on the mother of your children with your super hot secretary Being Alpha? Is sleeping with 100 hot girls because you're still not over your ex Being Alpha? Is barging into some guy's birthday party and stealing his booze Being Alpha?

"No, it's being an Overcompensating Dick.

"Everything described above requires confidence, power, persuasiveness, ...[b]ut they're all actions borne out of deep insecurities, moral faults and anxieties.

"The Alpha/Beta worldview leads to misogynistic thinking as well, since female behavior is interpreted not through their own thoughts and feelings, but through their reactions to the Alphas/Betas around them. The idea is that women . . . pursue the Alpha, use the Beta. This is fantasy. A role that's purely an extension of the guy's Alpha/Beta fixation in himself, a broken record playing inside his own mind. And not to mention it gives women little to no credit to both their nuanced preferences, as well as their ability to act on their own free will. When I see a man judging female behavior in these terms, my first reaction is always to think: this guy has spent way too much time chasing the wrong kinds of women.

"And finally, perceiving the world in these terms sabotages real relationships and strong emotional con-

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nections. If the definition of Being Alpha is somewhere in the vicinity of holding your personal drives above others, and the definition of an emotional connection with a woman is to empathize with her and literally see and feel the world through her eyes, then we have a major conflict of interest. The two are mutually exclusive. Genuine emotional connection, by definition, requires one to experience and relate to the drives, motivations and will of a woman. This is simply impossible if you're enmeshed in a self-serving and social-bulldozing mindset.

"And once you begin to date a girl you really like, other issues begin to crop up: i.e., commitment, sacrifice, compromise, boundaries, etc. These are anathema to the classic PUA/MDA dogma of Alphanness. And if you hold onto it, you're going to get hurt and screwed again... and it's not going to be her fault this time either.

"... When the neophyte is experiencing his first Alpha awakenings, it's not that he's getting free drinks that is making him successful, and it's not that he's able to intimidate another guy away from talking to a girl. It's not even that he's acting confidently. For the first time in his life, he's establishing boundaries around who he is and what he wants, and he asserts control within those boundaries. That's all. Everything else was just a mirage to get him to work up the nerve to take action.

"A new-definition Alpha Male has complete control over his boundaries, so if he CHOOSES to act selflessly, to act compassionately, to

sacrifice himself, or even to take a backseat and let others shine, he can. That's the mark of the True Alpha Male, the man who has utter control over his boundaries..." - Mark Hanson: Butchering the Alpha Male, February 11, 2011

"To be completely woman you need a master and in him, a compass for your life. You need a man you can look up to and respect. If you dethrone him, it is no wonder that you are discontented, and discontented women are not loved for long." - Marlene Dietrich (If this quote is not apocryphal, please let me know where and when she said this, someone, because I have been unable to track it down!)

"[T]he Lord has certainly not made married women subservient to have her polluted and tormented by the extortions and injuries of her husband but rather so that she may receive discipline from him, as if from her master and saviour, like the church from Christ." - Martin Bucer: *De Regno Christi*

"Man does not exist for the sake of woman, but woman exists for the sake of man and hence there shall be this difference that a man shall love his wife but never be subject to her, but the wife shall honour and fear the husband." - Martin Luther: *Vindication of Married Life*, 16th century

"Men have broad and large chests, and small narrow hips, and more understanding than women, who have but small and narrow breasts, and broad hips, to the end that they should remain at home, sit still, and keep house, that they should bear and bring up children." - Martin

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Luther: *Table Talk*, "Of marriage and celibacy", 16th century

"I do not wish them to have power over men; but over themselves." - Mary Wollstonecraft: *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*

"A: 'Do you believe in clubs for women?'

"B: 'Only if all other methods of persuasion fail.'" - Max Kauffmann

"I love the ability my natural, laid-back dominance gives me to cherish the woman in my life. If she is a warrior, I want our intimate relationship to help her fight better, if she is an artist, I want it to help her create with more ease and passion, if she is herself a care-giver, I want it to help make nurturing others easier and less exhausting. If there is one thing that I truly want our relationship to give to my love, it is this—empowerment." - Max Maximovich

"Women love to be sat on and conquered. They love to be bossed." - Maximilian Schell, Austrian actor (1978)

"We don't *need* to be taken care of, but we *want* to be. We're not helpless weaklings, but we want a man who can stand up to us. We're not generally submissive people, but when we meet the right man, we want to submit to *him*." - Melanie

"The daughter-in-law of Pythagoras said that a woman who goes to bed with a man ought to lay aside her modesty with her skirt, and put it on again with her petticoat." - Michael de Montaigne: *Essais*, I (1580-88)

"Anything less than total dominance these days makes you look real UGLY. And the more DOMINANT you are, the more LEADER-

SHIP you show, the more ATTRACTIVE you will be." - Michael W.

"Women don't want a politically correct man, they want a real man." - Michael W.

"The Democrats of the Sixties were all about making love and not war while a war-loving Republican is a man who would fight, bleed, sacrifice, and die for his country. Could you imagine what that very same man would do for his wife in the bedroom?" - Michele Zipp, Playgirl editor-in-chief, quoted in the Drudge Report: Playgirl Editor-in-Chief Outs Herself—As a Republican, Mon Mar 07 2005 19:42:14 ET

"I tell my young assistants that the more they dress for sex, the less sex they will have." - Miuccia Prada

"Never be afraid to ask for what you want from anyone, even if it means you won't get it. Then you will know whether to accept the choice on offer or move on. " - Mousling

"When Jack walks tentatively up to me and gives me that whiney 'Honey, can we please have sex?' he's already lost the battle. Let me explain:

"If you ASK for sex, the answer is no. It's the same principle as buying a car—if you have to ask the price, you can't afford it. End of story. The second you ask for sex, you are telling your woman that you have no intention of getting her off, you have no intention of being a MAN, and she is basically just a step up from the masturbating you were about to do. You're telling her that you wouldn't mind sex, but you're too lazy to 'work' for it. It's a 'just in case' request.

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"I'm sure, from a man's point of view, he's trying to be 'sensitive' to her needs and maybe a tad on the insecure side—but trust me, women don't like the weakness in their partners." - Mrs Jones: *The Orgy*

"Do you think it pleases a man when he looks into a woman's eyes

and sees a reflection of the British Museum Reading Room?" - Muriel Spark: *The wit of Women*

"'Sex,' she says, 'is a subject like any other subject. Every bit as interesting as agriculture.'" — Muriel Spark: *The Hothouse by the East River*¹⁵

QUOTATIONS: N

"According to the Torah, a man does not automatically have a right to his wife's earnings. However, the rabbis instituted that since the husband is obligated to feed, clothe and provide housing for his wife it is only fitting that he should be the beneficiary of her earnings. It should be noted that even after the rabbis established this rule, if a woman wishes, she has the right to tell her husband, 'I will support myself and I will keep my earnings.'" — N. Silberberg

"Nature intended women to be our slaves... They are our property, we are not theirs ... They belong to us, just as a tree which bears fruit belongs to the gardener." — Napoleon Bonaparte (1817)

"A man must learn to give a little space; A peaceful state—a submissive trait; A man must learn to gently dominate." - Neil Peart (Rush)

"Fortune is like a woman; if you wish to master her, you must conquer her by force. Moreover, she is more willing to be conquered by forceful men of ability than by timid cowards." - Niccolo Machiavelli: *The Prince*

"I think the PUA guys developed ways to 'signal' dominance as a

shortcut to increasing the odds of success with women—and it seems to have worked to some extent. But 'signaling' is not 'being' and so maturity means actually growing and developing as men. And of course it gets out of hand with men believing dick-headedness is a 'signal' of being alpha.

"Interesting study this month by Dr Diane Felmlee, a professor, and Dr Robert Faris, an assistant professor, at University of California, Davis, showed that the popular kids in high school use bullying to enforce their position in the pecking order. Mean Girls was right. BUT! The people in the top 2% were the least aggressive in enforcing the pecking order—both male and female. Maybe being truly alpha and having personal freedom and large mate choice means getting past all that AMOG shit." - Nicholas: comment on *Butchering the Alpha Male*, February 11, 2011

"She seems to need to know that I am serious and won't back down. I actually find this battle of wills quite exhilarating and I think she does too. She has always made it clear that she needs the man to be stronger and I wouldn't want to be with a

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woman who couldn't be herself, and just gave in to me. There is little chance of that with my wife, lol. However this means that her submission is all the more important to her and to me because it is not easily won. It also makes it something special just between us. Once she is certain that I won't back down it seems that she relaxes because she feels that I am strong enough to be in control and ... she loses the will to fight." —Nick

"Certain women should be struck regularly, like gongs." —Noël Coward: *Private Lives*

"Every woman loves more than a man does, but out of shame she hides the sting of love, although she be mad for it." —Nonnus: *Dionysiaca* (ca. AD 500)

"Innately, women look for men able to *take charge* and come to despise the man failing to live up to that instinctive expectation.

"Over the next several years—as footloose and fancy-free lifestyles become increasingly fraught with dubious outcomes amid turbulent circumstances—finding and maintaining stable relationships will become imperative. Although by no means a perfect solution for all problems, *Taken In Hand* can solve or reduce many marital difficulties." —Noone

"*Taken in Hand* should be for the good of the marriage or it should be that which is best for the woman. It should never be about what the man wants now." —Noone

"I do not believe that a man should ever spank a woman that he does not intend to hold tightly and keep for a lifetime. For, in its own

way, spanking consummates the relationship." —Noone

"To keep their sanity, women need to acknowledge the natural power of men over women—a power that women generally respect even if they may not relish it. If a man decides that it is time to spank a woman in his life, he usually has more upper body strength than she does and can get her feet off the floor to adequately carry out his intentions. More than a few women admit to routinely having sex after spanking or anytime the man wants it. Thus, if precautions are neglected in the passions of the moment, a little reminder can roll out nine months later. That is the power of the penis and the *rod*. Any woman who does not recognize the natural power of men to profoundly affect her life is living in a fantasy world." —Noone

"To be *taken in hand* is to be led —sometimes dragged —through the various halls, up the stairs, and through the doors of her mind until the woman emerges into the bright sunlight of martial bliss in the arms of the man who cared enough to rescue her. There, safe from the dragon that held her captive, she is free to be held, wooed, and loved as she never thought possible. Only then will she see her knight. Until then, the man in her life might as well be just another toad hopping about, gobbling insects, and leaving droppings." —Noone

"Although rarely explicit, a woman will frequently give implicit permission to a man to do whatever is necessary to keep the relationship together. She then expects him to act on her permission just as surely as if

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she put the implement in his hands and presented herself to be disciplined or punished at his pleasure.”

- Noone

“It is not a man's tyranny that hurts woman so much as his indifference.” - Noone

“Women respect men who are unapologetic. It gives them a feeling of security. The danger, of course, is the man who is both unapologetic and who lacks a conscience. That is why women have to be careful in choosing men.” - Noone

“A woman knows that the pain visited on her bottom is meaningful only if the man does it because he loves her. Otherwise, she will build

a stonewall around her emotions.” - Noone

“I agree with Friedrich Nietzsche. Whether he uses it or not, women do need to know that the man has a whip. And sometimes, it is necessary to get beyond the polite and tasteful, and into the *rape* aspect of discipline.” - Noone

“In a curious way, the phallus and the *rod* (stick, cane, paddle, etc.) are much the same. Both are controlled by the man and are used on the woman. Both can bring a woman into subjection. The phallus with a child. The *rod* by denying her composure. Both deny the woman control over her life.” - Noone¹⁶

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“Every woman loves the idea of a sheikh carrying her off on his white horse and raping her in his tent. It's a basic feminine instinct.” - Omar Sharif, Egyptian actor, interview, 1981

“The key for men is to be a good man who's kind and considerate, but also has alpha qualities. You've got to be the leader. You've got to be the MAN. If your woman gets out of line, you've got to take her aside and tell her that shit will NOT be tolerated.” - Omerta327

“I am afraid that women appreciate cruelty, downright cruelty, more than anything else. They have wonderfully primitive instincts. We have emancipated them, but they remain slaves looking for their masters all the same.” - Oscar Wilde: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

“How can a woman be expected to be happy with a man who insists on treating her as if she were a perfectly normal human being?” - Oscar Wilde

“Woman is essentially a Phallus worshipper ... permeated with a fear like that of a bird for a snake... It has never until now been made so clear where the bondage of women lies; it is in the sovereign, all too welcome power wielded over them by the Phallus..” - Otto Weininger: *Sex and character*

“Who that is wise would not mingle kisses with coaxing words? Though she give them not, yet take the kisses she does not give. Perhaps she will struggle at first, and cry ‘You villain!’ yet she will wish to be beaten in the struggle... He who has taken kisses, if he take not the rest beside, will deserve to lose even

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what was granted. ... You may use force; women like you to use it; they often wish to give unwillingly what they like to give. She whom a sudden assault has taken by storm is pleased, and counts the audacity as a compliment. Yet she who, when she might have been compelled, departs untouched, though her looks

feign joy, will yet be sad." - Ovid: *The Art of Love* (AD 5)

Looks like a different translation of the quote above: "What they love to yield; They would often rather have stolen. Rough seduction; Delights them, the boldness of near rape; Is a compliment." - Ovid: *The Art of Love* (AD 5)¹⁷

QUOTATIONS: P

"What does it mean to be a Christlike 'head' of his wife? It means that he is deeply concerned about her wellbeing. He is sacrificially committed to every aspect of her personal growth and fulfilment. He is willing to take full responsibility for her protection and guidance, while leaving her the freedom to be herself and fully develop into the unique woman God created her to be. In short, a Christlike husband is dedicated to loving his wife as much as he loves himself." - P.B. Wilson: *Liberated Through Submission*, p. 73

"Before my husband matured in the Lord and before I discarded my confrontational attitude, almost everything I said to him was responded to defensively. Now that he's chosen to take on the form of a servant in our relationship, he welcomes my comments. His defences are down. And since I know I don't have to plough through a seven-foot wall to reach him, I sometimes even find myself overly concerned with how I express something to him. I don't want to misuse my freedom nor bruise him. This clearly applies to marriage relationships. When a wife

can openly share her heart without fear of retaliation from her husband, she is able to vent her opinion, fears, and frustrations. Once she knows that her husband has 'heard' her, she can assume that he will integrate her input into his decision." - P.B. Wilson: *Liberated Through Submission*, p. 75

"The godly husband is humble enough to listen and strong enough to lead." - P.B. Wilson: *Liberated Through Submission*, p. 76

"[A] man ... tearfully explained the difficulties he was having with his wife. After the man went through a long list of faults, my pastor asked him, 'What was she like when you married her?'

"'Oh pastor,' he quickly replied, 'she wasn't anything like she is today. She was so nice.'

"My pastor responded, 'Well, she became the way she is now under your leadership!'" - P.B. Wilson: *Liberated Through Submission*, p. 77

"For the first few years of our marriage, almost every time I shared ideas or opinions, [my husband] simply said, 'That's dumb!' This hurt me deeply. I felt insulted and rejected. [In time, my husband] changed

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his communication style. He humbled himself to listen and consider, even when he didn't agree." - P.B. Wilson: *Liberated Through Submission*, p. 78

"Give your wife the freedom to express her emotions. [...] [L]isten to her opinions ... (that means looking at her when she's talking and not cutting her off), and when she is finished, consider her points.

"Then make your decision.

"Should you make the wrong decision, be sure you acknowledge it." - P.B. Wilson: *Liberated Through Submission*, p. 87

"Husbands should ask themselves one very relevant question: 'If your wife were a required subject at a local university, would you pass the course?'" - P.B. Wilson: *Liberated Through Submission*, p. 82

"If she has been taking the leadership in decision making for some time, be prepared for her gradual release. You'll need to be patient! [...] Ultimately, there will be peace in your home." - P.B. Wilson: *Liberated Through Submission*, p. 88

"She probably feels the [housework] is extremely arduous and taxing. One thing is certain: too much pressure can have negative results and will place undue strain on the relationship. [...] Don't fall into the trap of thinking that just because she's a woman, she should know how to clean. Develop ideas that will build her self-esteem and encourage her in that area. [C]onsider hiring a cleaning person on a weekly basis. Whatever you do, your wife will appreciate your understanding..." - P.B. Wilson: *Liberated Through Submission*, p. 82

"The whole fact of the matter is that all this modern emancipation of women has resulted in them getting it up their noses and not giving a damn what they do. It was not like this in Queen Victoria's day. The Prince Consort would have had a word to say about a girl like Stiffy, what?' 'I can conceive that His Royal Highness might quite possibly not have approved of Miss Byng.' 'He would have had her over his knee, laying into her with a slipper, before she knew where she was. And I wouldn't have put it past him to have treated Aunt Dahlia in a similar fashion.'" - P.G. Wodehouse: *The Code of the Woosters*

"A masculine-energy man does not marry a woman who gives to him, unless he is a 'little boy' who wants to be mothered. A masculine man marries a feminine woman who is available to receive from him, who respects him for giving, and who knows how to give back to reward him but always a little less than she gets." - Pat Allen and Sandra Harmon: *Getting to "I Do"* p. 59, Chapter 4, Is giving masculine or feminine?

"If you are a healthy, feminine woman, you are self-centered. You love yourself first, before any man. Then you share that love with your man and your loved ones. You say no to people, places, and things that hurt you in any way. You say no to whatever strikes you as unethical. You say no to the man you love." - Pat Allen and Sandra Harmon: *Getting to "I Do"* p. 59, Chapter 4, Is giving masculine or feminine?

"Masculine men like problems and challenges. They like the chase. 'Little boys' like Mama to do it for them;

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they don't want you to ask them for anything at all. Women who attempt to control seductively by saying yes to everything and suppressing feelings are insecure and inadequate as women." - Pat Allen and Sandra Harmon: *Getting to "I Do"* p. 60, Chapter 4, Is giving masculine or feminine?

"A masculine man is turned off by a yes-woman, because he knows she is needy, dependent, guilt-inducing, and easily manipulated by *any* man. He needs to trust your no to believe your yes." - Pat Allen and Sandra Harmon: *Getting to "I Do"* p. 60, Chapter 4, Is giving masculine or feminine?

"The 'male' energy is the giving, initiating, leading, active partner, who elicits surrender, receptivity, and bonding from his partner. [...] Therefore, one of the most important qualities your masculine man will look for from you is joyous receptivity. By this I mean not only that he will expect you to receive gifts with joy, but also the things that don't feel too good, such as how-to-do-it messages. A man doesn't want to fight tooth and nail to get a thought into your thick skull. He wants you to be receptive to his opinions, suggestions, and plans." - Pat Allen and Sandra Harmon: *Getting to "I Do"* p. 71, Chapter 6, What masculine men want from feminine women

"A man will maintain his woman's respect by making and keeping his commitments to the best of his ability. Any sloppiness with commitments will indicate that he doesn't cherish your feelings and wants his feelings cherished instead. Narcissistic people always want to be re-

spected *and* cherished, so if they fail to make or keep commitments, ...they want their behavior to be accepted and not confronted. But a woman with such a man will soon feel uncherished and quickly lose respect for him. It is important that you do not rationalize away your feelings in favor of his. ...[I]t is his job to cherish *your* feelings ahead of his own. ... As soon as you perceive your man slipping, you must talk to him about your negative feelings, in order for the relationship to function smoothly." - Pat Allen and Sandra Harmon: *Getting to "I Do"* p. 73-4, Chapter 6, What masculine men want from feminine women

"Feminine women literally gush painful feelings verbally, and they need to know that all those painful feelings will be accepted, even if not approved of, by their men. A masculine man ...does not run away from her pain, nor does he expect her to handle it alone." - Pat Allen and Sandra Harmon: *Getting to "I Do"* p. 75, Chapter 6, What masculine men want from feminine women

"It can be difficult to defer and suppress a need to control and instead be patient and passive. But this is what it takes to be with a masculine man." - Pat Allen and Sandra Harmon: *Getting to "I Do"* p. 77, Chapter 6, What masculine men want from feminine women

"A man needs to feel respected by the woman he is sexually attracted to, but all too often we manage to screw the whole thing up by criticizing his opinions, arguing about his philosophies, and generally making ourselves obnoxious. ... Being a sensual female means biting your lip

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now and then. ... Be positive and supportive and encouraging about his ideas, his plans, his opinions. ... Accept that he may have a point of view worth hearing, then hear it and go with it, unless it is unethical or immoral, or it doesn't feel good to your body." - Pat Allen and Sandra Harmon: *Getting to "I Do"* p. 104, Chapter 8, Flirt to attract

"You must nourish a man's self-esteem. Women who cannot allow themselves to feel 'little' next to their man are often afraid to be vulnerable and intimate." - Pat Allen and Sandra Harmon: *Getting to "I Do"* p. 119, Chapter 9, Finding your prince

"The problem was that instead of two people in a graceful game of give and take, marriage became a battleground on which men and women sought equal status and equal degrees of power and prestige. With both men and women vying for the same position, the dance was abandoned as two partners struggled for the lead. In the process, we forgot how to make love to one another." - Pat Allen and Sandra Harmon: *Staying Married... and Loving It*, p. 5

"Most marital problems occur when people try to maintain their single freedom and yet gain married benefits. The problem is narcissism—wanting it all." - Pat Allen and Sandra Harmon: *Staying Married... and Loving It*, p. 5

"Men want to get laid first and they want it as cheap as they can get it. The problem is that a woman who gives you sex without commitment is not a virtuous woman. Vaginas are fun to play with, but you don't marry vaginas. You marry virtue." -

Pat Allen, on TV show Millionaire Matchmaker

"[W]omen are the victims of 'benevolent' sexism (BS)—a subjectively positive set of attitudes about women that nevertheless treat them as weaker and in need of men's protection... BS is the payoff that women receive for adopting conventional gender roles and HS [hostile sexism] reflects the punishment that women incur for not toeing the line. Would women have been so successfully subordinated for so long through hostility alone?" - Peter Glick

"By 'woman' is meant sensuality itself, which is well-signified by woman, since in woman this naturally prevails." - Peter Lombard: *Sententiae*

"If you are nothing more than a yes-girl there is no spark, no tension, no heat, no interplay. It's boring. You become totally predictable and never challenge him. You become an accessory." - Dr. Phil McGraw: *Love Smart: Find the One You Want – Fix the One You Got*(2005)

"No is no negative in a woman's mouth." - Sir Philip Sidney: *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1580)

"A good woman ages beautifully. When I look at my wife, I see the most gorgeous woman in the universe. Her wrinkled hands got that way by keeping up with my two boys and working hard for them while I was on the road. The lines under her eyes are from years of shedding tears for me when I was at war, and those wrinkles on her brow are from decades of worry for me and my two sons. It was her legs they held on to when they were learning to walk, her lap was where

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they learned to read, and her breasts were their first nourishment. The first kiss those boys ever received was from her lips, and God willing, my last kiss will be from her lips.

"You two don't know what you're missing—or maybe you do. But all I know is that she's as beautiful, desirable, and lovely today as the day I met her, and I wouldn't trade one second with her for a lifetime of rowdiness with one of those harlots

you guys have waiting for you back home." - Philly, quoted on a now defunct Game site

"He who loves much beats hard." - Polish proverb

"[W]hile I find it hot that [a] woman be submissive in bed, I find it hot that a woman is not a push over outside of the bedroom. Someone who is going to stand up for herself, someone who doesn't take shit from people, including me." - Ponyboy¹⁸

QUOTATIONS: Q

*Please send in quotes for this page!*¹⁹

QUOTATIONS: R

"The great adventure of chivalric romance is the adventure of becoming what (and who) you think you can be, of transforming the 'awareness' of an inner self into an 'actuality'." - Richard Barber: *The Devil's Crown: A history of Henry II and his sons*

"So many variables enter the determination of alphaness that one faces an equation beyond solution. Strength, intelligence, maleness, courage, health, indefinable persistence, ambition, confidence... luck... political acumen... But the dominating cannot exist without the dominated, the leader without followers... a 'hereditary compulsion to comply' must be the real key to social organization... A more rewarding way of defining the dominance status of a supremely dominant individual is that he or she is the *focus of attention* of those holding subordinate

status within the same group... may it not be that true alphaness rests on the capacity to attract and satisfy a following?" - Robert Ardrey: *The Social Contract*, pages 116, 117, 120, 122

"Real men are not wantonly violent or hostile." - Robert Moore, Douglas Gillette: *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover: Rediscovering the Archetypes of the Mature Masculine*, page 5

"[T]he pussy must always be subordinate to the cock. If it isn't, she'll let you know with an icy cold stare, a backturn, a polite dismissal or, worst, another man's baby." - Roissy (heartiste): Women prefer dominant men. You don't say!

"Maxim #1a: Women desire men of better quality than themselves.

"Maxim #2: Women are turned on by displays of male power. [...]

"Maxim #6: Never. Make. It. Easy. For. A. Woman.

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"Maxim #7: Your girl will thank you for your steadfast devotion to your belief in yourself. [...]"

"Maxim #19: Withholding sex is the tactic of a woman who has already lost. It is mutually assured destruction. [...]"

"Maxim #22: You have to make marriage an attractive alternative for MEN—not women—if you want the institution to thrive. [...]"

"Maxim #30: Women will not hold it against you for trying to get into their panties on the first night. In fact, they will respect you more for your boldness and willingness to follow your manly desires. [...]"

"Maxim #33: Women need to test men for their grace under pressure."
- Roissy: Roissy's maxims

"A wife may love a husband who never beats her, but she does not respect him." - Russian proverb

"Freedom spoils a good wife." - Russian proverb

"Most of the time, in order to know and be known, we have to communicate or disclose something about our inner states or experiences ... Intimacy—the penetration of barriers—implies the capacity to let down defensive walls that keep us from revealing ourselves ... Once we know another and that person knows us, we are bonded in on incomparable way." - Ruthellen Josselson: *The Space Between Us*²⁰

QUOTATIONS: S

"Feminist consciousness is the consciousness of *victimisation* ... to come to see oneself as a victim." - Sandra Lee Bartkry: *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression (Thinking Gender)*

"I can't bear to be yelled at—I will turn and run, but a man who speaks softly, no matter what he is saying to me, will always hold my attention. I may not obey!! (grin) But I *will* listen!" - Sassy

"I'm a size 14—maybe a 16 in an unforgiving brand. Not enormous, but certainly a far cry from my ideal weight. There is no shortage whatsoever of sexual interest from men – some of whom are way, way above my level. Very handsome, charming men will line up around the block to

P&D a fat girl, but when it comes time to get serious, it's nothing but crickets. No thanks; I don't play, and I try not to let myself be flattered by the attention, because it's insincere.

"I've worked hard to improve myself in just about every other way, and I have the advantages of a decent build, a decent face, feminine fashion sense, pretty hair, domestic skills, what I hope is a pleasant demeanor and realistic expectations. And it's still a huge struggle. I can't even imagine what it's like for some." - Scoot

"Giving up autonomy [...] is easy when it is only for the duration of a scene with a play partner, but much more difficult when it is a life- or lifestyle-altering component of a

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long-term, committed relationship.”
—SexProf

“Dominance and submission are vacuous entities when considered as properties of individuals. They are emergent properties of relationships. A lone Dominant or submissive is like the sound of one hand clapping. If you listen very carefully, you might hear a faint rush of air. But, add another hand, and the sound can become as clarion and welcome as that of the shofar signaling the close of Yom Kippur.” —SexProf

“[A]t the heart of marriage lies the necessity to be emotionally warm and giving.” —Shaya Ostrov: *Breaking the endless cycle*, in *Jewish Action*, the magazine of the Orthodox Union

“When wives put on a lot of weight, it is almost always the fault of an inattentive or distracted husband. When their looks no longer mean anything to them, it's because they're married to someone who they don't think would notice anyway.

“Women love being attractive. [...] What woman doesn't want to be regarded as beautiful? How much more so a married woman who revels in her husband's attention. And when a wife suddenly starts growing a beard and doesn't go to a beautician, or puts on an extra load and doesn't run to the dietician, she is behaving unnaturally and we have to ask why.

“The blame lies with her husband who long ago stopped noticing her when she did get dressed up, so she concludes: “Why bother? With all the responsibilities I have with the kids, my job and running the home,

why put time into my appearance when he never looks anyway.”

“The healthiest diet for a woman is to feed off her husband's compliments. When told by the man she loves that she is beautiful, a woman is given the incentive to live up to the compliment. Silence and indifference, however, bloat her up and make her fat.

“If your wife has grown too wide, encourage her to trim down—not by telling her she's fat, but by telling her she's gorgeous. Her feeling that you watch her beauty will inspire her to watch her weight. [...] There is a direct correlation between a husband's attention to his wife, and a wife's attention to her looks.

“The next time you notice your wife has added a couple of pounds, perhaps it is you, rather than she, who should be looking in the mirror.” - Rabbi Shmuley Boteach: Are husbands to blame for their wives becoming fat?

“Marriages should be based not on trust, but on tension. Not on routine, but on raging emotion. Not on respect, but on jealousy. Not on confidence, but suspicion.

“Sounds crazy, right? But think of it this way: When you trust that your spouse will never be erotically attracted to a stranger and will never be unfaithful, you start taking him or her for granted. Isn't this really the number-one killer of marriage? Isn't growing bored and ‘falling out of love’ the most lethal of all marital illnesses? Won't a relationship be doomed if a couple is complacent and smug to the point of not having to work at it anymore?” - Rabbi

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Shmuley Boteach: *Kosher Adultery*, page 9

"If husbands and wives were more anxious about retaining each other's faithfulness, were far more focused on the strangers that are attracted to their spouses, and confessed to each other the petty attractions they harbor toward strangers, they would become far more desirable to each other, and they would start to woo each other all over again." - Rabbi Shmuley Boteach: *Kosher Adultery*, page 13

"[S]ex is the single most important means of keeping a man and a woman happily under the same roof together for a lifetime. ... [C]ouples who have healthy love lives also have healthy marriages." - Rabbi Shmuley Boteach: *Kosher Sex*, p. 9

"[A]scetic thinkers are right where they emphasize modesty. ... [W]ithout modesty there can be no intimacy. When sex is too public—when it is broadcast to the world—it is then no longer about two people sharing something special and exclusive." - Rabbi Shmuley Boteach: *Kosher Sex*, p. 52

"Under Jewish law a wife's contentment is the key to sexual harmony, as sex is the most central element of marriage." - Rabbi Shmuley Boteach: *Kosher Sex*, p. 69

"Total sexual focus on our spouse is the ultimate form of holy sex." - Rabbi Shmuley Boteach: *Kosher Sex*, p. 81

"Religious people have to get beyond the lie that sex in marriage is dirty and start embracing the idea that anything that increases a husband's lust for his wife—making her feel beautiful and pulling him away

from the distraction of other women—is holy and has God's blessing.

"Rabbinic legend relates that Moses initially refused the donation of the Israelite women's mirrors, to be used as copper for the priest's washing basin in the Tabernacle, because their purpose was to increase marital lust.

"But God scolded Moses for his reluctance, telling him that such prudery was misguided. The mirrors were particularly dear to Him since they strengthened the attachment between man and wife. Stated differently, God is in love with husbands who are in love with their wives.

"While the analogy is not perfect, why can't the same be said of other enhancements that bring fire into the marital bedroom? If a husband and wife want to use handcuffs to light their fire, who cares?" - Rabbi Shmuley Boteach: *Lust Is Jewish*

"Judaism offers an ingenious formula for enjoying the pleasures of Eros within a religious framework. [...] For 12 days out of every month—the five days of menstruation and seven days thereafter—a man's wife becomes forbidden to him. Not only may he not have sex with her, he may not even touch her or share her bed. Suddenly, from the confines of the routine and the predictable emerges the sinful and the erotic. And because he may not consummate his lust, he learns to hunger for her.

"Eroticism is further injected into the life of a relationship through the Jewish concept of modest dress, the main purpose of which in marriage is to enhance the erotic quality of the

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human body and impose “erotic barriers” that must be overcome in order to obtain the object of desire. It is specifically in the resistance created by those erotic obstacles and barriers that passion is to be found.

“Judaism, with its extensive laws, introduces the concept of the forbidden into endless areas of life, even mundane acts like eating a meal. [...]

“Eroticism transforms life from a destination into a journey, from a passage into an adventure.” - Rabbi Shmuley Boteach: *The Bible's erotic book*

“For a relationship to be truly successful, a man must drink up a woman’s seven dimensions: her voice, her feel, her scent, her taste, her looks, her personality, and her soul. When we fire on only one cylinder, the relationship is commensurately diminished. Intimacy never ensues. We end up in a functional marriage that never achieves unity and oneness. And in a marriage that is so utterly unsatisfying, not only is the possibility of divorce greatly enhanced, but much more tragically, the men never end up feeling like men, and the women don’t feel like women.” - Rabbi Shmuley Boteach: *Why Can’t They Fall in Love*

“One of the ways you can identify your soul mate is that they bring out the best in you. Your greatest attribute, whether it is being loving and compassionate, strong and disciplinarian, tenacity, intelligence, or emotion, your soul mate brings it out.” - Rabbi Shmuley Boteach: *Dating Secrets of the Ten Commandments*, p. 32

“[T]rue love consists of the choice to give up choice.” - Rabbi Shmuley

Boteach: *Dating Secrets of the Ten Commandments*, p. 33

“A soul mate ...brings you only one thing. But it is the most vital thing of all—namely, an end to your loneliness and a feeling that you are the most special person in the entire world.” - Rabbi Shmuley Boteach: *Dating Secrets of the Ten Commandments*, p. 18

“A man shall leave his father and his mother—according to the biblical command—and shall cleave unto his wife.... The greatest intensity of sensual passion will bring with it the highest psychical valuation of the object—this being the normal overvaluation of the sexual object on the part of a man.” - Sigmund Freud: *On The Universal Tendency To Debasement In the Sphere of Love*, in *Contributions to the Psychology of Love II* (1912), included in *On Sexuality* (page 250)

“[W]e cannot escape the conclusion that the behavior in love of men in the civilized world today bears the stamp altogether of psychical impotence. There are only a very few educated people in whom the two currents of affection and sensuality have become properly fused; the man almost always feels his respect for the woman acting as a restriction on his sexual activity, and only develops full potency when he is with a debased sexual object; and this in its turn is partly caused by the entrance of perverse components into his sexual aims, which he does not venture to satisfy with a woman he respects. He is assured of complete sexual pleasure only when he can devote himself unreservedly to obtaining satisfaction, which with

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his well-brought-up wife he does not dare to do. This is the source of his need for a debased sexual object, a woman who is ethically inferior, to whom he need attribute no aesthetic scruples, who does not know him in his other social relations and cannot judge him in them. It is to such a woman that he prefers to devote his sexual potency, even when the whole of his affection belongs to a woman of a higher kind. It is possible, too, that the tendency so often observed in men of the highest classes of society to choose a woman of a lower class as a permanent mistress or even as a wife is nothing but a consequence of their need for a debased sexual object, to whom, psychologically, the possibility of complete satisfaction is linked." - Sigmund Freud: *On The Universal Tendency To Debasement In the Sphere of Love*, in *Contributions to the Psychology of Love II* (1912), included in *On Sexuality* (page 254)

"The instincts of love are hard to educate... What civilization aims at making out of them seems unattainable except at the price of ...pleasure..." - Sigmund Freud: *On The Universal Tendency To Debasement In the Sphere of Love*, in *Contributions to the Psychology of Love II* (1912), included in *On Sexuality* (page 259)

"Purity is the ability to contemplate defilement." - Simone Weil: *Gravity and Grace*

"People assumed I was a lot stronger than I was because I had a big mouth and a shaved head. I acted tough to cover the vulnerability." - Sinéad O'Connor: in *The Irish Times*, 22 November, 1997

"The Professor of Gynaecology began his course of lectures as follows: Gentlemen, woman is an animal that micurates once a day, defacates once a week, menstruates once a month, parturates once a year and copulates whenever she has the opportunity." - Somerset Maugham: *A Writer's Notebook*, 1949

"You must remember that the two of us are born women and as such do not fight with men; since we are in the power of those who are stronger, we must obey these orders." - Sophocles: *Antigone*

"He also said she was the Local Busybody, adding that he did not approve of people who interfered with other people's lives. Flora heard this with delight. "Shall I be allowed to interfere with yours?" she asked. Like all really strong-minded women, on whom everybody else flops, she adored being bossed about. It was so restful." - Stella Gibbons: *Cold Comfort Farm*

"What I learned over time was that my wife wanted me to be firm. She needed me to take charge and be the head of the household... not as a game or a role play, but for real." - Stephen

"I have read that some men find being dominant a burden. These men want to occasionally take a break from having to be the dominant one. Does anyone think it is possible to take a break from who you are? The only way I can see how being dominant could be a burden is if the man is in conflict with it, as I was earlier in my own life. Having accepted that this is who I am, I am not burdened by it. In fact, my experience is the opposite. It is wonder-

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ful to be married to a woman who cherishes (and needs) this part of who I am." - Stephen

"What ties these two experiences together for my wife—being sexually taken and being taken in hand—is that at some point she surrenders to it. And although at first she resists, in the end she surrenders to the will of the man who masters her." - Stephen

"What I came to learn was that being the head of the household was not so much about being like Father Knows Best, but rather a matter of truly understanding how my dominance/ masculinity and her submission/ femininity worked together to meet our individual needs." - Stephen

"It is possible that it is not only male emotions that engender relationships among intellectuals in which the man is the more intelligent; perhaps the woman intellectual, despite her claim to want a large number of men to choose from, is unlikely to select a man over whom she has intellectual dominance (and who will not, therefore, "take the lead" in this crucial area). This thought occurred to me during a discussion with a feminist who, after arguing that dominance was not relevant to her relationships, remarked that she did not find masculine any man who was not more intelligent than she was." - Steven Goldberg: *Why Men Rule: A Theory of Male Dominance*

"[Quoting Velvet Hammer:] "I say soften her, sweeten her". Yeuch...I have no desire whatsoever to be softened or sweetened. I find this whole idea quite nauseating. I want

to be taken roughly, regularly and be kept in hand and under control."

- Sully, on Taken In Hand in a Wed, 09/05/2007—16:42 comment on a thread that is no longer on the site.

"So long as women are powerless relative to men, viewing a "yes" as a sign of true consent is misguided... Many women who say yes... would say no if they could... Women's silence sometimes is the product not of passion and desire but of pressure and fear." - Susan Estrich: *Real Rape*

"Here, Camp taste draws on a mostly unacknowledged truth of taste: the most refined form of sexual attractiveness (as well as the most refined form of sexual pleasure) consists in going against the grain of one's sex. What is most beautiful in virile men is something feminine; what is most beautiful in feminine women is something masculine. ... Allied to the Camp taste for the androgynous is something that seems quite different but isn't: a relish for the exaggeration of sexual characteristics and personality mannerisms. For obvious reasons, the best examples that can be cited are movie stars. The corny flamboyant femaleness of Jayne Mansfield, Gina Lollobrigida, Jane Russell, Virginia Mayo; the exaggerated he-man-ness of Steve Reeves, Victor Mature. The great stylists of temperament and mannerism, like Bette Davis, Barbara Stanwyck, Tallulah Bankhead, Edwige Feuillère." - Susan Son-tag: *Notes On "Camp"*, Published in 1964.

"Starting tomorrow when you wake up, don't gossip. See what happens if you just give up making comments about anyone not present.

QUOTATIONS

Listen carefully to the voice in your mind as it is getting ready to make a comment, and think to yourself "Why am I saying this?" Awareness of intention is the best clue for knowing whether the remark you are about to make is Right Speech. Is your intention wholesome, a desire to help? Or to show off? Or to denigrate?" - Sylvia Boorstein: *It's Easier Than You Think*

"Every woman adores a Fascist,

"The boot in the face, the brute

"Brute heart of a brute like you." - Sylvia Plath, "Daddy", 1963

"The type of woman a hero is attracted to is one that embodies his ideal of another person. Naturally, the man wants to conquer the object of his desire, a woman he considers a 'spiritual' equal. It does not mean that he is morally or intellectually

superior. According to Robert Mayhew, Rand 'regarded the male, by nature of his anatomy, as the prime mover in the act of sex.'

"No rational man is attracted—on any meaningful level—to a woman he has little or no respect for. It means nothing to conquer some drunken spring break tramp, or even indulge in a mutual, anonymous encounter performed just to 'scratch an itch.'

"To 'conquer' a woman, romantically and sexually, a man must first be deserving of her. He will not exclude her desires from his, because her fulfillment—in the context of a romantic partnership—is reciprocated." - Synthlord, on Objectivism Online²¹

QUOTATIONS: T

"[The woman] is her husband's partner in danger, destined to share with him and dare with him in both peace and in war." - Tacitus: *Germania*

"The most advanced thinkers questioned whether a woman's consent was even a meaningful concept" - Tama Star, in *Eve's Revenge*, referring to this: "So long as women are powerless relative to men, viewing a 'yes' as a sign of true consent is misguided... Many women who say yes... would say no if they could... Women's silence sometimes is the product not of passion and desire but of pressure and fear." - Susan Estrich: *Real Rape*

"A court upheld the "expressed consent" standard in a case where a pair of petting teenagers went too far, and the boy immediately ceased his activity when the girl requested that he stop." - Tama Star: *Eve's Revenge*, referring to this: "Any act of sexual penetration engaged in by the defendant without the affirmative and freely-given permission of the victim to the specific act of penetration [meets the definition of force required by law, and there was] no burden on the alleged victim to have expressed non-consent or to have denied permission." New Jersey Supreme Court, 1991, upholding a rape conviction where no force was used.

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"If that fear wasn't there, that absolute knowledge that I *must* do what he asks—and that ultimately, there is no other option—it would lose much—if not most—of what it does for me, and he would not get the raw, naked, soul-bared, completely engaged and into him ME that I can be." - Techiechic: What control means to me, Taken In Hand, Sat, 28/10/2006 - 23:14

"Stand before your god, bow before your king, and kneel before your man. Recipe for a happy life, that is," said Nanny, to the world in general." - Terry Pratchett: *Lords and Ladies*

"My choice to live in Taken in Hand relationship may seem on the surface to be unfeminist. We tried living in marriage without a head of the household: we shared the power equally. I was not happy; my husband was not happy. Now that my husband is the head of the household, we are happier than ever; we feel more loving and more connected. I know that the choice to be Taken in Hand is not for everyone, maybe not even for most, but it definitely is for me and I will not allow my freedom to choose to be restricted by anyone, feminist or sexist. Feminism is not at odds with a Taken In Hand relationship in which the man is the head of the household: I know because I comfortably live with both." - Tevemer

"Don't give her power. She doesn't know how to handle it. Women ... need to be tamed. Keep her chained down. Break the chain and watch her walk all over you. And you deserve it. Because you gave away your power for free. Women say

they're looking for nice guys, but they don't respect passive pussy men. Women want their lovers to be killers." - The Boyd Rice Experience

"Taken In Hand is not about total submission and self-immolation, and it is not about the man and his wishes being more important than the woman and hers, and it is certainly not about abdicating moral responsibility. It is not about replacing two heads with one, or subsuming one person into the other. It is not about mindless obedience or *I was only obeying orders*. Taken In Hand is a thoroughly mutual endeavour, for the benefit of both, in which both persons actively engage in the relationship and neither mind is superfluous." - The Boss

"Many women make the mistake of thinking that because sexual dominance and service-orientated submission leave them cold, they have no desire to be dominated at all. Or that they are mixed-up. Or that when their heart races at the thought of being with a man who wears the trousers, there is nothing sexual about it. Actually, it is sexual. ... They respond sexually to non-sexual dominance but not to sexual dominance." - The Boss

"There is no magic formula for relationship success: we have to make our own magic, starting from where we are as individuals, and jointly creating a relationship we both value." - The Taken In Hand Owner and Creator

"I felt owned before we had sex and I think that was completely the right way round to do it for me. With my previous partner I had sex on the first date and it was just

QUOTATIONS

cheap and nasty, whereas, waiting for a man to take control of me and take ownership of me made the whole act when it finally happened so much more passionate and intense." - ThisGirl

"Britons never will be slaves." - Thomas Augustine Arne: Rule Britannia (1740)

"Traditionally, sex has been a very private, secretive activity. Herein perhaps lies its powerful force for uniting people in a strong bond. As we make sex less secretive, we may rob it of its power to hold men and women together." - Thomas Szasz: *The Second Sin*

"I don't understand what people see in these books where the girls crawl around naked all the time and kiss the men's feet. What's sexy about that? Shall we try it tomorrow and see if we can figure it out?" - more or less what has been said by Mrs. Thorney, over time." - Thorney: soc.subculture.bondage-bdsm, Sat, Dec 11, 2004 12:41 am

"This [Taken In Hand] is BDSM, 24-7, without a safeword." - Tia

"You have to be quite a strong, forceful man to take a strong forceful woman like that, and I think I can." - Tony Chambers - Wallpaper - at Gucci Fall 2010 Ready-to-Wear fashion show²²

QUOTATIONS: U

"Love is real and significant, not romantic nonsense, not a feminist plot to enslave men." - Um: Showing up, Sat, 25/08/2012 - 18:41²³

QUOTATIONS: V

"Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size. Without that power probably the earth would still be swamp and jungle ... How is he to go on giving judgment, civilising natives, making laws, writing books, dressing up and speechifying at banquets, unless he can see himself at breakfast and at dinner at least twice the size he really is?" - Virginia Woolf: *A Room of One's Own*²⁴

QUOTATIONS: W

"The art of pleasing consists in being pleased." - William Hazlitt, *The Round Table*, "On manner", 1817

"Thy husband is thy Lord, thy life, thy keeper,

"Thy head, thy sovereign:

"One that cares for thee,

"And for thy maintenance.

"Commits his body

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"To painful labour, both by sea
and land:

"To watch the night in storms, the
day in cold,

"Whilst thou liest warm at home,
secure and safe,

"And craves no other tribute at thy
hands,

"But love, faire looks, and true
obedience;

"Too little payment for so great a
debt.

"Such duty as the subject owes the
Prince,

"Even such a woman oweth to her
husband:

"And when she is frorward, peev-
ish, sullen, sour,

"And not obedient to his honest
will,

"What is she but a foul contending
Rebel,

"And graceless Traitor to her lov-
ing Lord?

"I am ashamed that women are so
simple,

"To offer war, where they should
kneel for peace:

"Or seek for rule, supremacy, and
sway,

"When they are bound to serve,
love, and obey.

"Why are our bodies soft, and
weak, and smooth,

"Unapt to toil and trouble in the
world,

"But that our soft conditions, and
our hearts,

"Should well agree with our exter-
nal parts?

"Come, come, you forward and
unable worms,

"My mind hath bin as big as one of
yours,

"My heart as great, my reason
happily more,

"To bandy word for word, and
frown for frown;

"But now I see our Lances are but
straws:

"Our strength as weak, our weak-
ness past compare,

"That seeming to be most, which
we indeed least are.

"Then vale your stomachs, for it is
no boot,

"And place your hands below
your husband's foot:

In token of which duty, if he
please,

"My hand is ready, may it do him
ease." - from *The Taming of the Shrew*, by William Shakespeare

"All sex must stop before male su-
premacy will be defeated: ... *We know of no exception to male supremacist sex.* ... We therefore name inter-
course, penetration, and all other sex
acts as integral parts of the male
gender construction which is sex;
and we criticise them as oppressive
to women. We name orgasm as the
epistemological mark of the sexual,
and we therefore criticise it too as
oppressive to women. ... *If it doesn't subordinate women, it's not sex.*" -
Women Against Sex (A Southern
Women's Writing Collective), "Sex
resistance in heterosexual arrange-
ments", 1987²⁵

QUOTATIONS: X

*Please send in quotes for this page!*²⁶

QUOTATIONS

QUOTATIONS: Y

"The soul of a person is sensitive, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch writes (in *Horeb*)—a delicate instrument designed to be the holder of the most sacred blessings of the human being, of honor and serenity, respect and love, of every enjoyment that life can pride, of every worth-while feeling of happiness (p. 257). The power of speech was given to us to help nurture those supreme blessings, not to sow discord and bitterness. ... I think we can say that to speak hurtfully to someone essentially defrauds him or her of the

honor due to a fellow human being... It swindles him or her of ... the honor we owe to their unique selves—including those pesky little feelings and sensitivities." - Rabbi Yosef Edelstein

"The most beautiful clothes that can dress a woman are the arms of a man she loves. But for those who haven't had the good fortune of finding happiness, I am there." - Yves Saint Laurant (quoted in the Editor's Letter on page 41 of Town and Country magazine, September 2008)²⁷

QUOTATIONS: Z

"I've learnt to *greatly* value the concept of women who choose to be subordinate in an intimate relationship, as I feel it's the healthiest and highest form of respect a woman can offer a man. He in turn protects and cherishes her feelings where possible, so I feel it's a *very* nice and harmonious *balance* of yin and yang. Allowing the masculine to lead also *snuffs* out the destructive fight for control in so many modern day relationships. I'm a very happy and content woman. :)" - Zandra

"A woman who has never been hit by a man has never been loved." - Zsa Zsa Gabor, in Vanity Fair, December 1983²⁸

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"WHAT IS A TAKEN IN HAND RELATIONSHIP?" (22 SEPTEMBER 2003)

A Taken In Hand relationship is a fully-committed wholehearted sexually-exclusive marriage in which the husband wears the trousers and is firmly and actively in charge (to his wife's delight!) — and he puts his wife and their relationship first. Putting her and the relationship first is the key to creating a marriage in which the man is in control in a good, healthy and sustainable way.

Taken In Hand is neither all about the man, as in some D/s relationships in which the man has control, nor is it all about the woman, as in some DD relationships—it is for both. Neither spouse is a self-absorbed narcissist.

The wives in Taken In Hand relationships tend not to claim to be submissive (though their husbands may well consider them to be so) but they do strongly prefer *not* to be the one in charge in their relationship, and they do respect, honour and appreciate their husbands and strive to please them.

The husbands in Taken In Hand relationships tend not to claim to be dominant (though their wives may well consider them to be so) but they do strongly prefer to be the one wearing the trousers in their marriage, and they do enjoy dominating and submitting their wife when necessary to maintain their position — and indeed for the pure fun of it.

Taken In Hand relationships are not about the wife gritting her teeth

and suffering while she dutifully serves and obeys, and nor are they about the husband shouldering a horrible burden he would much rather not have. That all sounds very unpleasant to us. Taken In Hand is about using the power of a white-hot sexual connection to create a rock-solid permanent marital bond. It is intended to be *fun* and *sexy*, not a duty or a burden. If you don't find the idea of Taken In Hand exciting or at least strangely attractive, it is not for you.* Taken In Hand is not compulsory!²⁹

"WHY IS THE TAKEN IN HAND DYNAMIC SO POWERFUL?" (22 SEPTEMBER 2003)

We've been married a long time. When I started taking my wife in hand, it was as if someone had ignited a sexual nuclear bomb under us. We are a million times more aroused by each other than we have ever been. Why is the Taken In Hand dynamic so powerful?

For those drawn to this kind of relationship, a conventional equal relationship lacks something. It can be a bit grey, a bit stale, unexciting. Taking their relationship in a Taken In Hand direction brings vibrant colour and excitement to their lives. They connect at a deeper, more thrilling level. Sparks fly. Many report that they now feel that they are express-

* [This is an answer to a frequently-asked question: this page is part of the FAQ. Please try to ensure that your post is answering the question or discussing the above post. The question is: **What is a Taken In Hand relationship?**]

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ing a deep part of themselves to one another—a part that had previously lain dormant. Before, it may have felt as though they were going through the motions; now, they are seeing each other and connecting with each other on many different levels including at a level closer to their sexual core.

The husband in a Taken In Hand relationship feels more in control, more powerful, more manly even. He is free to be the man that he has always wanted to be but may have feared to be because we are all equal now. He has a means by which he can solve problems with his wife, nip fights in the bud, avoid emotional overload, and enjoy a thrilling sex life with the one he loves the most. But most of all, he finds Taken In Hand highly erotic. That causes him to focus his sexual attention more intensely on his wife. This causes him to become more and more attracted to his wife, and makes his experience of sex with her even better than before. This makes him feel good, and that makes him even more delighted to be married to his wife, and that leads to further positive changes in their interactions.

The wife in a Taken In Hand relationship feels intensely excited by her husband's control. This tends to make the couple's sex life even better than before, and that makes them both feel good, and feeling that in turn has further positive effects on their relationship more generally.

The wife now has a way of winning even when she is 'losing'. She finds that little issues that seemed important enough to fight about

before are no longer important. Her husband's control is a form of engagement, so if before she felt ignored or lonely, now she does not. She may be the least submissive woman you could ever meet, yet now she suddenly feels an intense desire to please her husband. She may have hated housework for 20 years and now suddenly she no longer finds it a burden and wants to do it for her more tidy husband. She may not have had that much interest in sex and now be thrilled and ready for it any time her husband wants it. The whole thing is highly erotic for her.

The Taken In Hand dynamic is powerful to the extent that it is an expression of the individuals' core personalities and sexualities. If their sexualities are not this way inclined, Taken In Hand will do nothing for them, but if they are, it does indeed prove a very powerful connector, both sexually and otherwise.

Taken In Hand is (amongst other things) a way of using the white hot sexual connection to create a rock solid bond between husband and wife. This makes it possible for the couple to solve a wide range of problems great and small that might otherwise not have been solved. And when problems are being solved rather than piling up, that leads to further good feeling in the marriage, which makes it possible for the couple to focus on enjoying themselves together including sexually.

Physiologically, in my view, the reason sex is so powerful as a conduit by which to solve problems in a marriage is that it can channel stress

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and limbic system reactivity in a combination of both symathetic and parasympathetic nervous system activity that is ultimately soothing and pleasurable.* When one's physiology is in this state one's thinking can be more rational than it would be were the limbic system reacting wildly and sending out fight-or-flight emergency messages that are hard to ignore.³⁰

"IS A TAKEN IN HAND WOMAN A DOWNTRODDEN DOORMAT YES-WOMAN?" (22 SEPTEMBER 2003)

No. Taken In Hand wives are not downtrodden: their husbands treat them exceptionally well. Indeed, Taken In Hand husbands put their relationship and their wife first.

Taken In Hand wives are not doormat yes-women either. They are typically anything but that. Taken In Hand wives tend to be strong, competent, accomplished, intelligent, high-dominance alpha women and are not submissive (unless you deem all those who prefer to live under the firm control of their husband to be so). Taken In Hand wives do not diminish themselves, and indeed,

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women often feel powerful and free in a Taken In Hand relationship.

Being a downtrodden doormat yes-woman sounds miserable, as though the woman is gritting her teeth and suffering in resentful silence, love diminishing by the day, if not long-gone.† By contrast, Taken In Hand relationships tend to be exceptionally happy, with both spouses striving energetically to better meet the other's needs as their Taken In Hand relationship evolves.³¹

"HOW CAN I DETERMINE WHETHER MY NEW GIRLFRIEND MIGHT BE OPEN TO TAKEN IN HAND?" (22 SEPTEMBER 2003)

Don't pay too much attention to what she says. We have all—male or female—been conditioned to make statements suggesting that we are into strict equality whether we are or not. Take no notice of such statements. They mean nothing.

Instead, pay attention to how she reacts when you;

- [Make] decisions rather than asking her to do so.
- [Tell] her the plan rather than asking her the plan.
- [Seek] her input not deferentially but more like a company director respectfully and kindly seeking the input of a lowly employee—i.e., it is your decision but that

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does not mean you want to trample all over the other person, and the other person might have a good idea you could use.

- [In] everything you do, quietly, confidently, actively take the lead as opposed to asking or expecting her to do so.
- [Protect] her and act protectively, such as insisting that she cannot walk home alone late at night, checking that she got home safely after work, etc.
- [Open] doors for her, help her put on her coat, insist that she allow you to buckle her seatbelt, insist that you walk on the traffic side of the pavement/sidewalk, and that when ascending stairs, she go first, and when descending, you go first, order for her in restaurants (having asked her what she wants). Ignore her objections and calmly, quietly, institute these chivalrous actions as friendly little unspoken rules. Do not call them rules, but in your own mind institute them as rules that you firmly but quietly enforce with a smile.

Do not do these things hesitantly, or deferentially, or as though you are desperate to please her: do them because you, as a man, want to wear the trousers in your (potential) relationship, and this is a harmless way to take charge from the start.

Most women, when you start doing this, will object. Some will object a lot. Do their objections continue, or do they stop objecting at some point? Is there any hint of a smile on their face when they object or are they looking daggers at you? A woman who wants a Taken In Hand relationship may well object just like other women, so you have to institute this on an on-going basis

and see what happens. Does it become more of an issue or less of an issue? Does she find it more objectionable over time or less? This is a good test not because women who want a Taken In Hand relationship are less likely to object in the first instance, but because it is a relatively harmless issue on which to take a firm stand and see whether she adapts to your firmness or gets more and more angry about it.

In a rare case in which a given chivalrous action seems to be deeply upsetting (as opposed to annoying or irritating) to a woman for some reason, and she asks you if you would mind not doing x or y because it makes her feel sad, don't ride roughshod over her wish that you not do it, and do explore with her what the bad association is, or why it makes her feel sad. But such a case should be rare.

Watch her actions and how she adapts to all these things. Even Taken In Hand women will object to being protected and so on. But Taken In Hand women might not be able to hide a little smile as they object, and they will soon stop objecting and accept your firmness. Watch their actions, ignore their words. Is there a sparkle in her eye as she objects? Then her objections are just words.

Keep reminding yourself that just as you have been conditioned to pretend to be a man into equal relationships, so the women you meet have also been conditioned to delude themselves that they want an equal relationship. Don't write your

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girlfriend off too soon.* Give her time to feel safe enough to throw off her socially acceptable mask. Watch what she does, not what she says.³²

"HOW CAN I DETERMINE WHETHER MY NEW MAN MIGHT BE OPEN TO TAKEN IN HAND?" (22 SEPTEMBER 2003)

Ask him.

Or tell him that in a relationship, you need the man to wear the trousers, and see how he reacts. Or find a light, non-interrogatory way to ask him whether in a relationship he would find it (a) preferable to be in charge, or (b) a burden. On no account quiz him, interview him, or make him feel tested. That will be particularly off-putting to a man who prefers to be in charge.

Instead, pay attention to everything he says and does and raise the idea or some part of the idea whenever it is natural to do so. For example, if he takes charge in some way, whether of you or in a situation, express your appreciation and show very clearly that you love what he said or did. If he seems not to understand why, explain that he *took charge*, and that that feels very *manly* to you, and that you find that exciting. If appropriate in the particular situation, tell him you admire him or his ability to take charge.

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However you raise the idea, do be aware that just as women have been conditioned to pretend that they want an equal relationship, so men have been conditioned to pretend that they would never want to be in charge. Expect a negative reaction when you first mention it. But as time goes on, watch what he does, not just what he says. Once he realises that you are serious, he may well begin to engage with the idea and like it. Do give him time to process the idea.

Does your new man generally seem manly to you? Is he a man's man? Does he enjoy fixing things? Does he enjoy manly pursuits? Does he pursue you, or does he expect you to do the pursuing? Does he initiate, or is he more comfortable when you initiate? If he is not well-off, does he prefer to plan free or cheap dates rather than allowing you to pay?

Receive graciously. Whenever he makes and chivalrous gesture, or does anything for you, or seems protective of you, or bossy with you, smile warmly and thank him very much. Let him see your eyes shining with appreciation and feel your gratitude.

If he keeps asking you what you want to do instead of making a plan himself, and that is making you feel like the man in the relationship, ask him very gently and kindly and above all respectfully whether he would consider planning your dates rather than asking you. Then, when he takes you to a sports event or a horror film or something else that you hate, instead of sulking and complaining, find a way to enjoy it,

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and thank him very much for having invited you. If nothing else, enjoy focusing all your attention on your man and enjoying his own enthusiasm for whatever it is.

Never ever say anything negative or ungracious about any date planned by him. Always find *something* wonderful about it to thank him for. Play the Pollyanna Glad game. The game consists of finding something to be glad about in every situation. So if you hate horror films and he takes you to one, spend the whole film wrapped in his big strong manly arms and be glad of the opportunity to be in his arms.

If you hate sports, be glad of the opportunity to try something new. Be glad of the opportunity to do lots of people-watching. Be glad of the opportunity to learn something new (such as the rules of the game) from your man. Be glad your man is proud of you and wants to take you with him to events he enjoys. Smile and be open to the possibility that you might actually enjoy the event after all.*

If you see a woman speaking disrespectfully to her husband, tell your man that you consider that appalling, and let him know that you think men should be treated with respect.³³

"HOW DO I FIND A WOMAN WHO WILL WANT A TAKEN IN HAND RELATIONSHIP?" (22 SEPTEMBER 2003)

They are everywhere. You can find them all around you in your daily life, as well as online. Do not make the mistake of thinking that few women would want this. Many if not most women you will find attractive in person will, if single, be attracted to you if you take charge while putting her first.

Wherever you meet a woman, if you want a Taken In Hand relationship, no matter how shy you are, pursue her. Do not pursue so intensely that you seem desperate or creepy, but do pursue her actively and confidently.

If you don't feel confident, act "as if..." you do, and you will gain confidence. Spend time out and about in your community meeting people and talking to them instead of just looking online. This will further increase your confidence.

Yes, this takes more courage and time and effort, but it makes it more likely that the woman you meet will (1) live locally, which is important, and (2), be attractive to you in real life, which is very important for a Taken In Hand relationship.

When talking to women you meet out and about in your community, keep in mind that women can feel scared by men who are strangers talking to them, and at least initially, either keep some physical distance between the two of you, or better still only approach in daylight hours when there are lots of people around

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so that she won't fear that you are going to physically assault her.

Try to imagine meeting someone you fear might be intending to physically assault you (a massive man with a super-tough streetfighter look in a dark alley?), and think about what would tell you, in that interaction, that the other person was not actually intending to assault you. Use such insights when you meet women in your community.

For example, if the tough streetfighter guy looked very laid back and happy and as though he was having fun rather than fixing you in his intense gaze, that might help, might it not? If he didn't invade your space but talked to you from where he was, that might help. Or if you happened to be standing next to each other or walking in the same direction each for your own reasons, that might help. If he started talking to you but in a light way that was entertaining and did not require anything of you by way of response, that might help, might it not?

If you are not a natural at this, there are some good insights about how not to scare woman in game/PUA material about how to approach women you meet when out and about in your community. NLP material is also very useful.

Never give a woman your card (unless she gives you hers); always be the one to take her card and call her. Never try to get a woman to pursue you—that would be to make her the man and you the girl in any potential relationship. If the woman does want a Taken In Hand relation-

ship, that will destroy any interest in you she might have had.

When you find a woman you want, don't pay too much attention to what she says. We have all—male or female—been conditioned to make statements suggesting that we are into strict equality whether we are or not. Take no notice of such statements. They mean nothing.

Instead, pay attention to how she reacts when you;

- [Make] decisions rather than asking her to do so.
- [Tell] her the plan rather than asking her the plan.
- [Seek] her input not deferentially but more like a company director respectfully and kindly seeking the input of a lowly employee—i.e., it is your decision but that does not mean you want to trample all over the other person, and the other person might have a good idea you could use when you yourself make the decision.
- [In] everything you do, quietly, confidently, actively take the lead as opposed to asking or expecting her to do so.
- [Protect] her and act protectively, such a insisting that she cannot walk home alone late at night, etc.
- [Open] doors for her, help her put on her coat, insist that she allow you to buckle her seatbelt, insist that you walk on the traffic side of the pavement/sidewalk, and that when ascending stairs, she go first, and when descending, you go first, order for her in restaurants (having asked her what she wants). Ignore her objections and calmly, quietly, institute these chivalrous actions as friendly little unspoken rules. Do not call them rules, but in your own mind insti-

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tute them as rules that you firmly but quietly enforce with a smile.

Do not do these things hesitantly, or deferentially, or as though you are desperate to please her: do them because you, as a man, want to wear the trousers in your (potential) relationship, and this is a harmless way to take charge from the start.

Most women, when you start doing this, will object. Some will object a lot. Do their objections continue, or do they stop objecting at some point? Is there any hint of a smile on their face when they object or are they looking daggers at you? A woman who wants a Taken In Hand relationship may well object just like other women, so you have to institute this on an on-going basis and see what happens. Does it become more of an issue or less of an issue? Does she find it more objectionable over time or less? This is a good test not because women who want a Taken In Hand relationship are less likely to object in the first instance, but because it is a relatively harmless issue on which to take a firm stand and see whether she adapts to your firmness or gets more and more angry about it.

In a rare case in which a given chivalrous action seems to be deeply upsetting (as opposed to annoying or irritating) to a woman for some reason, and she asks you if you would mind not doing x or y because it makes her feel sad, don't ride roughshod over her wish that you not do it – being in charge while putting her first assuming that you will not be insensitive. One size does not fit all. There will be rare issues

that you think it will be fine to be firm about, that will generate a completely unexpected response such as terrible sadness in response to what seems like fun, nice chivalry and not at all something that would be a problem for anyone. If something like this happens, find out what the bad association is, or why it makes her feel sad, and be sensitive to her wishes, obviously. But such a case should be rare.

Watch her actions and how she adapts to all these things. Even Taken In Hand women will initially object to being protected and so on. But Taken In Hand women might not be able to hide a little smile as they object, and they will soon stop objecting and accept your firmness and love it. Watch their actions, ignore their words. Is there a sparkle in her eye as she objects? Then her objections are just words she thinks she has to say.

Keep reminding yourself that just as you have been conditioned to pretend to be a man into equal relationships, so the women you meet have also been conditioned to delude themselves that they want an equal relationship. Don't write a woman off too soon. Give her time to feel safe enough to throw off her socially acceptable mask. Watch what she does, not what she says.

You do not need to ask a woman if she wants a Taken In Hand relationship, and in fact I would not do that. To talk about it can make you seem weak, or as though you are asking something of her, but you are not asking anything

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of her, so there is no need to raise the matter with her.* I would simply take charge while putting her first, and see how she adapts to that.³⁴

"HOW DO I FIND A TAKE-CHARGE MAN WHO WILL WANT A TAKEN IN HAND RELATIONSHIP?" (22 SEPTEMBER 2003)

First, forget the idea of finding someone online. You are much more likely to find someone in your everyday offline life than online. Instead of spending time looking online, spend that time getting out into your community and meeting men in person. The man for you needs to be attracted to you, including physically in person, not just to your online presence. If you do meet someone online, arrange a meeting in a safe public place before you give much information about yourself and before you become emotionally attached. Too many spend too much time building a mental relationship with someone online, only to discover, when they meet, that the other person smells bad or has some other repulsive characteristic that somehow failed to be conveyed in their text chats and even video chats. Meet very early to avoid wasting everyone's time. Many people play online with no intention of developing anything offline. If you want a

relationship that will be a full offline relationship, look offline, not online.[†]

Avoid spending lots of time at home. Go walking in your community in daylight hours. Dramatically increase the amount of time you spend out in your community. Explore it thoroughly. And when you are out and about in your community, start *noticing* people. Smile at people. Talk to people. And don't be in a hurry to end conversations started by strangers. Try to find something interesting in every person you meet, whether an attractive man or a little old lady—*everyone*. Explore people instead of ignoring people. Once you start looking for what is interesting about people, you will start finding interest even in individuals you might once have written off instantly as uninteresting. Make a point of looking for at least five good things about every man you meet. Find out what each man is passionate about or interested in. Whenever a man's eyes light up, or he becomes more animated, or he smiles, ask more about whatever he has just said. It doesn't matter if you have no interest in whatever interests him. It is still very interesting to hear about others' interests. You could learn something. You will also see more of the person if you explore what interests him.

Stop writing people off as unsuitable before you've even given them a chance. Men who want a Taken In

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† [UPDATE: If you do decide to put up a dating profile on an online site, before you do that, read this post, this post, and this entire page. Really. Read it.]

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Hand relationship do not display any obvious dominant characteristics, so it is no good looking for such characteristics. Think about it: do you yourself display any obvious signs that you want a Taken In Hand relationship? Of course not! So don't expect men you meet to display obvious signs either. Some men even appear hopelessly shy and tentative and yet they yearn to be the one wearing the trousers and firmly in charge in a happy marriage with a lovely woman. If you concentrate on the overt form, you will miss the substance, and it is in the substance that you will find what you are looking for, not the form. Don't let the form mislead you.

Instead of writing off that shy man stacking shelves at the supermarket who always smiles at you and asks if you need help finding anything, smile back at him and give him a chance to engage you in a conversation.

But he's just a shelf stacker, and you are a lawyer—it would never work! He *might* be just a shelf stacker, or he might be the manager, or he might be a student who is working his way through college trying to finish his PhD. Or perhaps he is a fascinating entrepreneur whose business has been wiped out in the recession, but who is picking himself up and starting again from nothing. Stop making assumptions. And even if he is just a shelf stacker, so what? There's a lot to be said for a man willing to work even in a job that might be boring. He might be far more dependable and kind than your fellow hotshot lawyer. And if you want to live under the control of

a man, for goodness sake choose someone good and kind rather than someone more obviously dominant. Open your mind and heart to a wider range of men. You may be surprised by how interesting and intelligent many men in lowly jobs are if you get to know them.

But he's shy! How could he possibly be a take-charge man? Easily! You may say that having the inclination to be in charge doesn't necessarily equate with knowing how, but in a fully committed marriage with a beloved spouse who would welcome her husband's control over her, many a shy man with the inclination *learns*. And in a fully committed marriage, you will care enough to help him learn. Far better to find a good, honest, kind, loving man who is willing and able to learn to take charge, than a so-called 'dominant' man who is too narcissistic and unloving ever to be in a good marriage, let alone a Taken In Hand one.

If a man calls himself "dominant", or worse, "a dominant", or if he is involved in the BDSM community, be aware that he is unlikely to be what you are looking for if you want a Taken In Hand relationship. In a Taken In Hand relationship, the husband *loves* his wife and *puts his wife and their relationship first* to balance his power over her. He strives to be the strong leader, to protect and support his family. He feels good, and indeed sexually excited, by being the one who wears the trousers, and by his wife's delight in his control of her. By contrast, many men who call themselves "dominant" have no desire to take care of a wife and family, and if anything put

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themselves first and are more turned on by the idea of using and abusing multiple women who serve their every whim, than by being the man in charge in a Taken In Hand marriage.

Moreover, even looking for a man who seems to be very much in charge at work is not foolproof. Some such men—just like many women reading this site who are super-in-charge authority figures at work—in no way want to be in control at home.

So if you want to find a man, start by opening your eyes and heart to a much, much wider range of men than you have been focusing on. Stop writing people off because they don't display any obvious sign of dominance in the first few dates. Pay more attention to finding out whether he is a good person and less attention to whether he is dominant.

Don't even write off men who initially state very firmly that they are not the type to control a woman, or who make other statements to the effect that they disapprove of unequal relationships. Really! Don't! Have you yourself never made any statement that might suggest that you would not want to live under the control of a man? Men make these kinds of statements because they are good men who would not want to control a woman who would not like that. They are not thugs, in other words. That's a good thing, not a bad thing! They may never have met a woman who knows that she wants a Taken In Hand relationship. It may take a bit of time and thought for them to realise that some women actually do

want the man in their life to be in charge, including women who seem particularly take-charge themselves. Get to know men well. Give them a chance! Plenty of men on this site were shocked and aghast when they first heard that some women want to be taken and kept in hand by a man. Some of them took many, many months to process the information in the privacy of their own minds, before finding their power and thrill as a man in control and fully embracing the Taken In Hand idea. Many men here who have initially been shocked by the idea talk about their desire to be in charge having been totally buried until they heard about Taken In Hand.

In addition to opening your heart to men and finding interest and good things in everyone you meet, also think about what you yourself have to offer a man who might want you. How will you add to your man's life? How will you make his life easier and more pleasurable? What is it about you that will make him love being with you and think that you are the best thing that has ever happened to him—and still think that in 40 years' time? Looking good and staying fit and slim and attractive are very important but not enough. Come up with a list of concrete ways in which you will add to a man's life rather than being a headache for him. If you can think of ways in which you might detract from his life or cause him trouble, work on correcting those faults. Being high maintenance is not an attractive quality. Work on making yourself a woman a man will be able to look at in 40 years' time and say *I*

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am so glad I married you. I am the luckiest man alive. What man has such a wife?

Unless you are the kind of woman for whom sex is no big deal and doesn't change anything—one for whom sex does not make you feel bonded, or bad if the man loses interest after having sex with you—get to know a man very well before becoming sexually intimate with him. See him in a wide range of situations and with his family and friends. Consider waiting until you are engaged to have sex. It may be old-fashioned, but many women find that it is only when they stop having casual sex that they start meeting men who are looking for a wife.

Here is one idea that will increase the chance that you will meet someone, and help you get to know men without the pressure of a dating situation:

Consider having a regular dinner party at your home every week, inviting both male and female friends and anyone you meet who seems interesting. If you make it a regular event, such as every Friday night, you will get into the habit of inviting people, and you can ask your friends to bring an interesting person you haven't met. You will thereby increase your circle of friends and start meeting more men in a relaxed setting in which you can get to know them without the pressure of a date.

You may think you don't have enough friends to even start doing this, but once you start, you will naturally become more open to talking to strangers, and this will be more likely to lead to you issuing invitations to your soirees, even to

men you have only just met, and before you know it your weekly dinners will be where all your friends old and new want to be every week, and where they want to bring interesting people. The key is to make it a regular event.

To make it more likely that you will keep doing this, consider making these soirees casual potlucks, in which your guests each bring a dish and/or a bottle, as opposed to you getting stressed out spending too much time and money preparing gourmet feasts. Potlucks or other casual meals also make it easier to accommodate unexpected guests, making it possible to invite people at the last minute, and to issue open invitations for any future Friday night soiree (though in practice inviting someone to a particular event is more likely to be successful than issuing a vague open invitation). The point is the company rather than the food and drink.

Do you have any ideas for how to find a man suitable for a Taken In Hand relationship? If so, please add your ideas in the comments below.³⁵

"HOW DO WE GET STARTED?" (22 SEPTEMBER 2003)

Start slowly. If you take things too fast, you can run into trouble. So start slowly. How you start really

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depends on who you are as individuals. What will work for one couple will not work for another. Expect there to be problems and missteps and backward steps along the way. Keep your sense of humour, and avoid endless analysis: sometimes what is called for is more action and less analysis.

The husband could start by taking charge in small ways, especially in ways that clearly help his wife.

If there is anything your wife does or doesn't do that you find concerning, and that is not something so close to your wife's heart that it might hurt or harm her to change, you could choose that issue on which to take a stand, but do be very careful not to try to change something central to your wife's being, or something that is a touchy subject with your wife. For example, I would avoid like the plague trying to get your wife to lose weight (a very sensitive subject for many) and I would never try to get your wife to give up a hobby she loves. But if your wife keeps moving your newspaper, or if she contradicts you in public in a way that makes you feel humiliated, those might be more appropriate issues on which to take a stand.

When you take a stand, remember that this is not an unpleasant fight, and your wife is not your enemy. Remember that what you are aiming for is for this to be fun and sexy for your wife, not unpleasant.

On an on-going basis try to increase the amount of appreciation you express for your wife, so that she is able to interpret your stands positively. Remain calm, kind and

loving. Do not sulk, get angry, or deny your wife attention or affection. Those are sure ways of going from a quite nice conventional relationship to a really unpleasant, unhappy conventional relationship. In a Taken In Hand relationship, the man's control is for the delight of both husband and wife. He *puts his wife and their relationship first*. Keep that in mind at all times. Be the best person you can be, and the best husband you can be.

As you experiment with taking control, notice the effect of your actions, and make modifications if things start going awry.

If you are the wife in the above couple, I strongly advise you on no account to criticise your husband's attempts to take charge. Try to view everything positively, even when it doesn't immediately strike you as positive. Remember that this process of your husband taking charge is not easy, and he *will* make mistakes, but he is doing this for you, to please you, not just for himself, so give him the benefit of the doubt and strive not to shame him.

Also, resist the temptation to talk endlessly about Taken In Hand and your path to a Taken In Hand relationship. This can make a man feel that his every move is being watched and judged, and judged insufficient at that. That won't help. If there is anything very important you need him to change, try to wait three days before you say anything, because sometimes, things that seem important now won't seem to matter at all in three days' time. When you do say something, take great care to express your wish in a way that

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makes your husband feel good rather than bad.* Otherwise he may be unable to hear your wish.³⁶

"IS TAKEN IN HAND ABOUT DISCIPLINE?" (22 SEPTEMBER 2003)

No. Taken In Hand is about using the thrill of the husband firmly wearing the trousers in the relationship, to keep the marriage delectably hot, sexy, joyful, happy and interesting for both spouses. That is what Taken In Hand is about.

In many or perhaps most Taken In Hand relationships, there is no physical 'discipline' or 'punishment' (such as spanking) at all. Many Taken In Hand folk have no interest in 'discipline' or 'punishment' at all, and complain whenever anyone posts anything on this site about 'domestic discipline'.

In some Taken In Hand relationships, 'discipline' or 'punishment' does play a part in the relationship, but it is not the focus of the relationship. The relationship is not *about* 'discipline'/'puni-shment'.

Some Taken In Hand inclined husbands abhor discipline and regard any man who would hit a woman (including OTK) as beneath contempt. Others would not countenance a relationship in which they

did not have consent to 'discipline' or 'punish' the woman.

Where 'discipline' or 'punishment' is a feature of a particular Taken In Hand relationship, it *adds to* the relationship as opposed to being *the focus of* the relationship. It is just one way *some* husbands keep their wife in hand.

As explained more fully ... Taken In Hand life is not an endless round of bad behaviour and punishment or rules and consequences, even in cases where 'discipline' or 'punishment' is a part of the relationship. The Taken In Hand woman is an adult and perfectly capable of functioning as such. She does not need to be held accountable to get her to behave like a half-decent human being. Nor does she need to be endlessly disciplined by a long-suffering man. We all make mistakes and do the wrong thing sometimes, but the same is just as true of men as it is of women.

The reason some Taken In Hand couples employ discipline or punishment is not that the woman is a lesser person than the man and needs her behaviour corrected in a way that could not equally apply to the man. Nor is it that the man wants an unhealthy wish to criticise and punish her legitimised. He is more likely to feel *protective* of her!

The main reason is that the two individuals *connect erotically* very powerfully through the control that is being wielded. There are so many other ways of remaining firmly in charge, though, and when you make discipline the focus of your relationship, you tend to forget about other

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ways of maintaining control, some of which can be quite delectable.

If you are that way inclined, discipline (in moderation) can be extraordinarily erotic, and extraordinarily intimate. If you get into an endless round of bad behaviour and punishment, and that works for you, great; but for most people, that would be destructive rather than constructive. For many non-spankos, that would become a real drag, or feel like a game, or be just plain exhausting.*

In summary, no, Taken In Hand is not about discipline, but some Taken In Hand folk do very much enjoy the thrill of discipline.³⁷

"IS TAKEN IN HAND ABOUT DOMINANCE AND SUBMISSION?" (22 SEPTEMBER 2003)

No. Most Taken In Hand couples do not identify with those labels. In fact, many find those labels positively off-putting.

While it is true that in the Taken In Hand relationship the husband actively *dominates and submits* his beloved wife, he is more likely to think of himself as being the man of the house, or as being the one who wears the trousers in his marriage, than to call himself 'dominant'.

Moreover, for him, being with a woman who serves and obeys with-

out question and lives only to please would get old fast. He prefers life with his delightfully spirited woman and would hate her to diminish or lose herself, because he loves her the way she is, and finds her interesting.

In much of the D/s world, many who think of themselves as dominant have a strong preference to be served and obeyed without question, and have no interest in *dominating and submitting* a woman. Many such men prefer to have multiple women serving and obeying them. Such men would never want a Taken In Hand woman, and nor would a Taken In Hand woman ever want such a man. Their preferences are too different.

Taken In Hand wives tend not to call themselves 'submissive'. They do serve their husband, just as he serves them, and they do respect, honour and appreciate their husband and try to please him—they are definitely not domineering misandrist shrews—but they do not have the deep *need to serve* that many in the D/s world consider to be the essence of submissiveness.

In many parts of the D/s world, it is frowned upon for the 'submissive' partner not to serve and obey without question. Indeed, 'submissive' individuals who do not serve and obey without question are disparagingly branded 'faux-subs' and 'fake subs', and accused of 'topping from the bottom', as though they have a duty to serve and obey without question, and are derelict in their duty if they ever don't do so.

In the Taken In Hand world, there is no duty to serve and obey, and as stated above, the husbands in these

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relationships would find that a bit boring. We are a bit less frowny and a bit more fun. If what you are doing is not fun, fascinating and sexy, why do it? We are about creating vibrant happy marriages, not having people grit their teeth and do their alleged duty whether they like it or not.

Similarly, there is a curious phenomenon, from a Taken In Hand perspective, of some D/s folk contending that 'dominance' is a burden that the 'dominant' partner must shoulder, gritting his teeth if necessary. Again, if it feels onerous, why do it? Life is too short for shouldering unnecessary heavy burdens you hate.

So is this about dominance and submission? No, not really.* We're just a bunch of ordinary couples who simply prefer that the husband wear the trousers in the relationship.³⁸

"WHY DOES TAKEN IN HAND MAKE SPOUSES MORE ATTRACTED TO EACH OTHER?" (22 SEPTEMBER 2003)

For the first time in my life, I don't feel restless, trapped, or tempted to have an affair. Why is my wife/husband so much more attractive to me now we have a Taken In Hand relationship?

Because you are acting in accordance with the core of your being,

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and your spouse is making that possible for you and likewise acting in accordance with his or her own core being. It is powerful. You are focusing more of your sexual energy and creativity on your spouse.[†] When people do that, their attraction for one another grows and intensifies.³⁹

"WHAT IF THE MAN MAKES A MISTAKE?" (22 SEPTEMBER 2003)

The husband *will* make mistakes. He is a human being, and human beings are fallible and make mistakes.

To expect yourself (the husband) not to make mistakes is totally unrealistic. Try to do your best, but don't fail to act because you fear making a mistake.

Yes, to act is to risk making a mistake, but that is the human condition. The risk-free life is no life at all. There is no way to make progress in any sphere of life without risking making mistakes. Making a mistake that causes problems for your spouse is not the same as wilfully or negligently wronging her. Your wife loves you and knows that your heart is pure, your intentions good.

Yes of course strive to solve problems rather than causing them, and

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yes of course take care to put your wife and the relationship first, but whatever action you take, whatever changes you make, you have no choice but to risk making mistakes even as you strive not to make a mistake.

Mistakes can easily be forgiven. Inaction can be less easy to forgive, and more terrifying, because it can feel to your wife as though you are indifferent to her or don't care enough to bother taking action or making changes to improve your marriage. If you make a mistake, apologise and move forward. Learn from it. Don't retreat into the paralysis of inaction. Faint heart never won fair lady. Fortune favours the brave. He who dares wins.

Making changes and taking action is a risk, but don't forget that failing to make changes and take action is also a risk. There is no course of action that is risk-free, so choose the course that seems to you most likely to solve a problem. If it later turns out that you were mistaken, make another change to correct the problem. Keep making changes iteratively until you can't see any problems. Then make changes to make things even better.

Keep in mind that in a Taken In Hand relationship, the mistakes you may be worried about making are mistakes that happen when you are striving to improve your relationship. Many husbands do not put much energy and creativity into improving their marriage. What a gift you are giving your wife in caring so much that you want to solve problems and make changes that will improve your marriage. Your

wife is much more likely to feel deep gratitude for your efforts than angry that you make some mistakes along the way.

You will make mistakes. You are human. That's life. There is no alternative.* Try not to become paralysed by guilt or the fear of making mistakes.⁴⁰

"DOES THE HUSBAND HAVE TO BE PERFECT?" (22 SEPTEMBER 2003)

No, of course not. If that were necessary, how many men would qualify?!

No, he does not have to be perfect. Naturally, a man who has abusive monster tendencies might not be the best candidate for a Taken In Hand relationship, but there is no reason your average fallible human being who is reasonably sane and tries to be a good person can't take charge in his marriage.

Remember: in a Taken In Hand relationship, the husband is not misapprehension that he is an infallible omniscient godlike figure. He knows he is a fallible human being, so, to balance his power over his wife, he takes care to put his wife and the relationship first. He also knows that the point of the whole thing is to create a white-hot sexual connection and thus a rock-solid bond between husband and wife. He wants a happy marriage. That is why this

* [This is an answer to a frequently-asked question: this page is part of the FAQ. Please try to ensure that your post is answering the question or discussing the above post. The question is: **What if the man makes a mistake?**]

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seems like a good idea: because for those with Taken In Hand inclinations, a Taken In Hand relationship is fun, fascinating and erotic.*

If you believe you know what perfection is, let alone expect it in your relationship, do not attempt any kind of intimate relationship, let alone a Taken In Hand one, because you will be horribly disappointed.⁴¹

"IS THIS INFANTILISING FOR THE WOMAN?" (22 SEPTEMBER 2003)

Not at all. These relationships are between two adult individuals each of whom takes responsibility for his or her own actions. Taken In Hand wives are perfectly competent, capable adults, and there is nothing in their relationship that infantilises them or reduces their ability to function in the normal adult world.[†] This is nothing to do with the idea of a childish, irresponsible faulty woman needing a parent-like figure to tell her what to do.⁴²

"WHY DO SOME WOMEN WANT THIS KIND OF RELATIONSHIP?" (22 SEPTEMBER 2003)

* [This is an answer to a frequently-asked question: this page is part of the FAQ. Please try to ensure that your post is answering the question or discussing the above post. The question is: **Does the husband have to be perfect?**]

† [This is an answer to a frequently-asked question: this page is part of the FAQ. Please try to ensure that your post is answering the question or discussing the above post. The question is: **Is this infantilising for the woman?**]

- Because it turns them on.
- Because being in this kind of relationship with someone who shares this preference is exhilarating, fascinating and fun.
- Because when their husband gets all bossy and firm and makes it clear who's boss, they feel like thrilled and delighted and vibrantly alive.
- Because they know that to make a relationship spectacularly good takes considerable effort, and this effort becomes mysteriously easy and itself a source of joy and excitement when their husband is firmly wearing the trousers in their relationship.
- Because it makes them want to do everything in their power to please their husband and make him feel treated like a king.
- Because it adds an extra dimension to their relationship: for those women who like this kind of thing, it is like the difference between a flat, grainy, faded, grayscale photograph and a super-high-definition movie in brilliant colour.
- Because it is nothing like being platonic roommates.
- Because when it is difficult, it is difficult in a more hardcore, interesting way, and they know that both of them find the relationship so valuable that they will both do whatever is necessary to solve the problems they encounter.
- Because they hate with a passion being in control of a man.
- Because feeling like a man's mother, boss, supervisor or leader does violence to their soul.
- Because it feels right.
- Because being firmly controlled paradoxically makes them feel powerful and free.
- Because it makes them feel more autonomous, more adult and more

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whole—indeed, it facilitates actual personal and psychological growth in them, including the growth of their psychological autonomy.

- Because it enables them to feel more aware of themselves as female—woman qua woman.
- Because they enjoy the different ways they interact with their husband, including childlike playful silliness, cuddly love, romantic bliss, and hardcore heart-pounding adult intensity.
- Because in a Taken In Hand relationship they are never bored.
- Because sometimes they like to feel protected and looked after and feminine.
- Because when their husband starts calling the shots they develop a mysterious compulsion to obey.
- Because they love the way their husband looks at them, with such passionate desire in his eyes.
- Because this kind of relationship gives them the tools they need to avoid or minimise disconnecting arguments that might otherwise be very damaging.
- Because they find the dance of control fascinating.
- Because they love to see the deep contentment, manly pride, satisfaction and joy on their husband's face.*
- Because it somehow makes many seemingly unrelated aspects of life better.⁴³

* [This is an answer to a frequently-asked question: this page is part of the FAQ. Please try to ensure that your post is answering the question or discussing the above post. The question is: **Why do some women want this kind of relationship?**]

“IS TAKEN IN HAND A POLITICAL MATTER?” (22 SEPTEMBER 2003)

No. Not at all! In fact, we have readers and writers of all sorts of different political persuasions. We probably all disagree with one another about politics, but we have in common that we are drawn to the idea of a Taken In Hand relationship. We askposters not to get into political discussions on this site, and we often delete posts whose focus is political rather than being about Taken In Hand relationships.

This site is in no way intended to be political. It is in no way intended to be making any political point or argument. It is a site about relationships, and only about relationships. It is aimed only at those who might be or are drawn to the kind of relationships we talk about here. It is not intended to convert anyone to anything. It is not intended to be for everyone. It is not intended to criticise other choices.[†] It is just a supportive resource for people who want or are in this kind of relationship.⁴⁴

“HOW DO I KNOW WHETHER TAKEN IN HAND IS RIGHT FOR ME?” (22 SEPTEMBER 2003)

A Taken In Hand relationship is a fully-committed wholehearted sex-

† [This is an answer to a frequently-asked question: this page is part of the FAQ. Please try to ensure that your post is answering the question or discussing the above post. The question is: **Is Taken In Hand a political matter?**]

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ually exclusive marriage in which, to the delight of both spouses, the man actively controls the woman. The degree of control and the way the husband retains control vary from Taken In Hand couple to Taken In Hand couple, but in all cases both husband and wife actively want the husband to have the upper hand. No matter how strong, tough and forceful a Taken In Hand wife may be, and no matter how hard she might try to take control in their marriage, she would be aghast if her husband were to let her get the upper hand. Likewise, no matter how loving, kind and considerate the husband may be, he prefers to keep his wife firmly in hand.

The husband in the relationship has a lot of power over his wife by virtue of his position at the one who is in charge. Being a good person, he wants to do no harm, so he takes care to put his wife and the relationship first.

Do you really want this kind of relationship? If you don't, it is not right for you.

Does your spouse want this kind of relationship? If not, then unless he or she changes his or her mind (and that often does happen) it is not right for you.

Does it sound like a burden or a duty to you or to your spouse? Then it is not right for you.

Are you a person who takes responsibility for your own actions, or are you a person who blames others for your problems? If you are hypercritical, angry, hyperemotional, spiteful, grudge-bearing, vengeful, defensive or tend to place blame or feel victimised, Taken In Hand is not

right for you. It requires a certain maturity, kindheartedness, and the ability to forgive and let past problems go. Whether you are a man or a woman, you need to be actively aware that you are a fallible human being, and that all human beings are fallible including your spouse. It is essential that you understand that there will be mistakes, and that that does not mean that your spouse is a bad person. If either you do not or your spouse does not meet these criteria, Taken In Hand is not right for you.

Do you and your spouse each have the ability to trust the other and be vulnerable with each other, or is one or other of you a bit paranoid or distrustful? If you are the man, do you feel absolutely sure that your wife would never under any circumstances violate your trust in her by, for example, accusing you of abuse? If you are the woman, do you feel safe with your husband? Are you absolutely sure that he would never intentionally injure you or abuse you in any way? Do you each feel sure of the good character of the other? This is really very important.

How do you and your spouse each and jointly handle change? Change is stressful, even good changes. Changing your relationship in this way is a big change in most cases, and there can be all sorts of unintended consequences and unexpected events and emotions. If one or both of you is not good at handling change, Taken In Hand may not be right for you.

How have the two of you handled disagreements or incompatibilities in the past? Have you more often

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than not managed to handle difficulties well? Have you generally turned towards each other or have you been unable to adapt to each other? In moving your relationship in a Taken In Hand direction, you are likely to find that you will each have a different idea of what you want, and the two of you need to be able to create a path that you both like, rather than sticking rigidly to your first idea of how to proceed, otherwise Taken In Hand is not for you.

Whether you are the man or the woman in a potential Taken In Hand relationship, if to you Taken In Hand feels like a burden, it is not for you. It needs to be something you positively want, something that you think will give you pleasure and joy and passion and peace.* There must be something in it for you as well as for your spouse.⁴⁵

"WHY ARE TAKEN IN HAND RELATIONSHIPS SO INTIMATE AND CONNECTED?" (22 SEPTEMBER 2003)

For many drawn to Taken In Hand, taking their relationship in a Taken In Hand direction feels so right and so good (despite the many problems there may be in making this change) that there is a deep sense of peace, a feeling of relief and joy, renewed love and intense passion.

* [This is an answer to a frequently-asked question: this page is part of the FAQ. Please try to ensure that your post is answering the question or discussing the above post. The question is: **How do I know whether Taken In Hand is right for me?**]

When they move their relationship in a Taken In Hand direction, the spouses tend to feel deep gratitude to each other. They tend to have more fun together. They tend to find more pleasure in conversing with each other, doing stuff together, and their sexual connection is seriously intensified.

Taken In Hand dynamics facilitate problem-solving and reduce or eliminate any power struggles, fighting or bickering there may have been. The less bad feeling there is in a relationship, and the more good feeling, the more intimacy and connection is possible, because the individuals more and more want to please each other, and they are less and less defensive and confrontational with each other.

Intimacy and connection also tends to improve when the sex life of a couple improves, and for those drawn to Taken In Hand, taking their relationship in this direction typically dramatically improves their desire for each other and thereby their sex life.[†]

Taken In Hand requires deep trust on both sides, and the more each person trusts the other, the more intimate the relationship can be.⁴⁶

[†] [This is an answer to a frequently-asked question: this page is part of the FAQ. Please try to ensure that your post is answering the question or discussing the above post. The question is: **Why do couples tend to find that their relationship becomes more connected and intimate when they begin to move into a Taken In Hand relationship?**]

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"IS A TAKEN IN HAND RELATIONSHIP FOR EVERYONE?" (22 SEPTEMBER 2003)

No. If Taken In Hand were compulsory, it would be an abomination. A Taken In Hand relationship is only for those who want it.

And not everyone who wants a Taken In Hand relationship has the necessary qualities, attitudes and ideas for all types of Taken In Hand relationship. Examples: there are some men whom power corrupts; there are some women who do not take responsibility for their own actions.* Not everyone is strong enough for a Taken In Hand relationship.⁴⁷

"WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TAKEN IN HAND" (23 SEPTEMBER 2003)

What is Taken In Hand all about? What are its background assumptions and premises?

As you may have read elsewhere on the site, a Taken In Hand relationship is a wholehearted sexually exclusive marriage in which, to the delight of both spouses, the man actively controls the woman. The degree of control and the way the husband retains control vary from Taken In Hand couple to Taken In Hand couple, but in all cases both husband and wife actively want the husband to have the upper hand. No

matter how strong, tough and forceful a Taken In Hand wife may be, and no matter how hard she might try to take control in their marriage, she would be aghast if her husband were to let her get the upper hand. Likewise, no matter how loving, kind and considerate the husband may be, he prefers to keep his wife firmly in hand.

Given that the focus here is on relationships in which the man has the balance of power and control, is this site advocating a return to times past in which many women had no choice? Is it about lifeless, stereotypical relationships?

No, it is actually about feeling free to engage in the kind of relationship that suits you, the individual. I'd like to see a future free from prescriptions and proscriptions about the sort of relationships deemed acceptable. Not everyone would want to be in a Taken In Hand relationship, but this site is a supportive forum for those who do.

You may not like this site. You may have very different preferences. If so, do not view us as enemies, merely as individuals with our own preferences. This site is geared to my own preferences as its owner, so it won't please everyone. But it is in no way a criticism or attack on different preferences. To each his own.

That said, let me explain how I see Taken In Hand.

A good relationship is a harmonious one. It is one in which the spouses can talk to each other and feel accepted. It is one in which problems are solved and there is a lot of love and kindness and joy. It is one in which the spouses feel appre-

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ciated and cared for. It is one in which the spouses feel happy and vibrantly alive as opposed to flat and bored. It is a connected, deeply engaged, intimate relationship, as opposed to a disconnected, distant relationship lacking intimacy. It is one that is dynamic and evolving, as opposed to static and stereotypical. It is one in which important needs are met. It is one that facilitates improvement at the individual level, at the level of the relationship, and more widely.

I strongly believe that for a marriage to be good in the sense I have just described, a good sexual connection is essential. When the sexual connection goes awry, a marriage is in danger. When people feel sexually unfulfilled and bored with each other, they feel flat and lack energy, or they get their excitement elsewhere. When everything is going well in the sexual relationship, it makes people feel happy and alive. It makes them feel good about the other person. It dramatically increases the amount of positive feeling in the relationship. So for me, Taken In Hand is at least partly about creating the sort of relationships that instead of sliding into stale, sexless, platonic friendships (if they are friendly at all!), stay vibrant, exciting, passionate, and white hot in the long term.

There is no recipe for how to create an exciting long-term sexual connection, and what will work for one couple will not work for another. What will work for one couple at one time may not work for the same couple a year later. Individuals have different preferences, and their pref-

erences evolve and change over time. How you relate best with one person may not be the same as how you relate best with another. But if you don't have a sexual connection, what you have is a platonic friendship, and that is not enough for a good marriage.

On Taken In Hand, we are, amongst other things, exploring the power of consensual control, dominance, and 'coercion' to foster an exciting sexual connection. This may not be your cup of tea. Or you may enjoy some aspects of this exploration but not others. If you think of yourself as submissive or obedient, you might dislike articles like this one, this one or this one. If you have come to Taken In Hand expecting to find a site focusing on spanking or domestic discipline (DD), you might hate articles like this one, this one or this one. If the way you maintain a good sexual connection in your relationship is through an ongoing fun, exciting "battle", or your ideal woman is the Amazon warrior type, you might have zero interest in articles about soft, submissive, surrendered women, and the gentle men who love them. And conversely, if you are here because you like the "surrendered wife" idea, you may well dislike articles like this one, this one, this one or this one. Just think of this site as an evolving exploratory entity and if there is anything that makes you want to stick your head down the lavatory or have me locked up, just ignore it.

Taken In Hand is about having the courage to be the person you really are, refusing to be cowed into being someone you're not—whether

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you are a tameable shrew, a civilised gentleman, a woman of valour, a man who yearns for a woman who is as strong as he is, or a hardcore high-intensity lover. It is about taking joy in being able to choose freely the kind of relationship you want.

It's about love and intimacy and passion and excitement. And the occasional bit of force—for those of us who like that sort of thing.⁴⁸

"LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR OTHER POSSIBILITIES" (23 SEPTEMBER 2003)

I believe that relationship is a path to the divine. In my walk with Christ I sometimes feel a connection to others because I have paid attention to those closest to me. By building a connection with my wife, it makes it so I can build connection with my family, my friends and members of my community. I think it must start with those closest to us, especially our wives and/or husbands. When we create a solid, loving relationship with them it gives us a base from which we can reach out to others. I know what you mean by some intense relationships being stultifying, because I have witnessed this also. It is not pretty. However, I often wondered if those relationships were based on what one could gain from the other rather than what one could give to the other. Does this make sense?

The relationship I have with my wife has blossomed because we are both interested in each other and what we can do for each other. It is my wife's loving, generous spirit that inspires me to reach out to oth-

ers. To feel a human connection with others. I feel that once that primary relationship is solid it makes it so much easier to be a better parent, a better friend, and a caring member of a larger community. I once knew someone who worked for social justice, he loved humanity, it was individual people he couldn't stand. To my way of thinking much can be known about a person by the kind of relationships they develop. When we have strong family connections we can then reach out to others and say hey come join us. At least this has been my experience.

Domestic discipline (DD) works for us because it draws us closer together. By developing this primary relationship it makes other connections possible. It has helped to build trust between us that has allowed us to delve ever deeper into each other and interestingly our own selves. She has become a mirror. Sometimes I want to hide from that mirror because I am afraid of what I may see. But I choose to look because I trust her. DD has played no small part in this process of building trust. I hate to make it sound like DD is some magic bullet, or that this is easy, but I do feel strongly that DD has laid the groundwork for other possibilities.⁴⁹

"WHAT IF SHE ISN'T INTERESTED IN THIS?" (26 SEPTEMBER 2003)

If you have just met the person, and she is not interested, you might be best advised to find someone who is, because if this is something you really want, you may find that

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you are incompatible with someone who does not share that desire.

If you are already married, then you need either to get divorced and find someone who is—which may be surprisingly difficult and unpleasant—or forget about Taken In Hand and focus on the good things you have with your wife apart from that.

However, many are understandably initially negative about the idea until they see that it is not what they had imagined it is, so don't give up hope prematurely. Perhaps you can find a form of Taken In Hand that your wife would find delightful—there are so many possibilities. Consider your wife as an individual with her own preferences and see if you can do more to fulfil her wishes using Taken In Hand in some way if possible, or any way if not.

If you recommit to your marriage and try to make it good for both of you, you never know what good things may result from those efforts. When you go out of your way to give your wife pleasure and make her life more enjoyable, you may well find that she will surprise you.* If you are thinking of getting divorced, before you do that, read Michele Weiner Davis's *The Divorce Remedy*.⁵⁰

"WHERE ARE ALL THE STRONG MEN?" (26 SEPTEMBER 2003)

A few months ago I became single again after a long relationship and I've recently started dating again for the first time in years. In my relationship, my man was the kingpin, the man in charge, the head of our household. Don't get me wrong, he wasn't a control freak, he was kind and gentle (most of the time!) and giving. He cared about me and it showed, but ultimately, he wore the pants, and if I deserved it, and sometimes just for fun, he'd put me over his knee.

This is not something I've been able to tell that many people—it's taboo. But I believe many women want a strong man with a firm hand, and that's what I'm looking for now that I'm single again. As a strong-willed woman, I need a man I can't push around. But where do I find such a man? If you'd like to help with Janet's Search For A Strong Man, you can leave your helpful ideas in the comments below! Don't be shy now!

I've tried dating New Men and I get bored and don't feel the level of excitement I'm looking for. I can be equals with a *friend*. But in a relationship, I like to be aware of the difference between us. It provides more intimacy and keeps the sexual tension alive. The power exchange creates more of a thrill and more of a connection. There has to be a high level of trust between you, and this is valuable evidence of deep trust. It's interesting! It's spicy! It's hot! It can be a tool for positive change in

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cases where you have problems. It makes me feel relaxed, peaceful, safe and protected, and it makes him feel manly, protective and powerful. Finally, it can help in resolving any disagreements you have.

So now I'm single and dating again. First thing that hits me is, men these days want a woman who will be the boss. Sure, they say they don't want a boss but their actions speak volumes... Even if they don't want that, they don't want to be in control either. I've met some real nice men... who want strict equality.

So, I've met this cute guy, right? He's right in every way except he's never taken a woman over his knee and doesn't want to hurt me. My question is: how do I introduce this whole idea?

I've discovered it's not that easy! Someone pointed out that I need to figure out what I want if I'm to tell him. Not a bad idea! So I hope I'll learn to articulate what I want more clearly. If you're a woman in the same boat, what are *you* looking for? Have *you* thought about it? Can you articulate it? If so, I'd love to hear from you. Maybe we can help each other here!...⁵¹

"TO LET GO" (28 SEPTEMBER 2003)

I have been in a very loving, passionate and stable marriage for 4 years now. We have progressed in our personal relationship from domestic discipline to having a more D/s element. I have all my needs and desires responded to, and our connection couldn't be stronger, although I'm told it's not near as strong as it's going to get.

I get spanked often. Not daily, and not necessarily for misdeeds. But we use spanking to establish our roles, and to create passion that is white hot. We also use spanking as a way to correct behaviour, although we don't use very nasty methods. I am spanked with his hand, a crop, a paddle, and a hairbrush. This is all done with love and intent.

Now, a twist. I am submissive. Not all the time, although we are striving for that. I am completely bedroom submissive though.

My husband is an executive within a corporation. He has a high stress job. He talks and understands and co-ordinates in millions of dollars. All of which I take an interest, to a point. In my words, my biggest interest lays more in "what's my end?" But my husband does come home wired a bit. So, he feels that if he comes home stressed out, and needs to relax, he now wants to spank me. He feels that if I offer my bottom to him, and spans, crops me, and I encourage him, he will feel lots better.

So, yesterday, he comes home late afternoon from such a meeting. He is so on. His eyes are bright and he zeroes in on me. We have dinner, and he sends our daughter (6 years) off to a friend's to play. He sends me in to rest for a half hour or so. He tidies the kitchen. He then comes in the bedroom, holds me and tells me he needs to spank me to let go.

He undresses me, puts me over his knee and uses the crop. He warms me up first with his hand, but then, he spends the next 20 minutes or so, really cropping me. And the louder I scream, the more he lets go. I am

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told to encourage him to crop me harder and "don't stop till he feels better". He never really "thrashes" me, but he does use that crop efficiently. By the end, he lets me up, gives me a drink, and then proceeds to play with me and I am so aroused I literally succumb to the sexuality within seconds.

Afterwards, when we talk, he tells me I have never been cropped so hard before. He feels because I was doing it for him, I could take more. If I were being spanked for behaviour, it changes the feelings, and I can't take it.

Well, the end result...WOW... It was so hot. So, if this is what being submissive means, I am going on this trip never to return. I am so in love with this man who understands my needs so well, and can satisfy his needs by feeding mine. Sometimes life is so good.⁵²

"TRADITION, FEMINISM, VICTORIA AND ALBERT" (30 SEPTEMBER 2003)

The phrase *taken in hand* comes from the expressed sentiment that there are times in a woman's life when a man needs to *take her in hand and straighten her out*. Women from more traditional backgrounds are likely to use the phrase *taken in hand*—or its derivatives—as a euphemism for getting a spanking in which they may not be totally willing participants at the moment.

While the world has changed since phrases such as *taken in hand* were understood, one thing to remember is that there was a time when, while society did not completely condone

wife spanking—as it was sometimes called—there was a general agreement that, as long as it did not transgress into abuse, that reducing a woman to tears across man's knee was preferable to smoldering resentments and eventual divorce.

Domestic discipline in today's society seems so out of place because the misandric solution for all domestic difficulties has been to kick the man out of the house. Relegated to the fringes of society by an entrenched matriarchal *new world order* that continually portrays women as victims and men as evil buffoons, domestic discipline has developed its own jargon—much of it borrowed from the bondage community. However, until fairly recently in terms of human history, the practice did not require elaborate schemes to work.

Men and women understood each other and what to expect from each other better than they do today. For example, a boy who had heard an older sister get a spanking or two intuitively comprehended that the female anatomy and psyche are not nearly as fragile as they have been more recently portrayed. Girls understood that fact of life as well. (While women still understand it, men do not.)

So it was that without lists of rules and punishments, women understood when they had crossed the line and what they might expect as a result. For the most part, mostly from girl talk and motherly advice, brides understood that if a wife deceived her husband then she could expect to be spanked. Absent implicit social understandings, today's

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domestic discipline has to rely on more explicit arrangements.

While the women's liberation movement has been good for women in many respects, an increasing number of women are becoming increasingly frustrated with the gulf that separates them from men. They know that it is not nature, but are unsure as to what to do about it. Men are likewise bewildered.

Keeping the above in mind, perhaps the best thing that a website can do is dispel the modern myth, largely created by a radicalized and embittered feminist movement bent more on misandry than anything else—that spanking is either abusive or else it is titillating—that it degrades a woman to the point that she must be certifiably crazy to endure it or else it is a kink foisted on her because she was spanked as a child by her father.

The problem for women and domestic discipline is the same as for women and Christianity. Some of the most unmitigated disasters occur when a woman drags post-modern feminist ideology into a spin-off of an ancient patriarchal religion. Much the same thing is true when the same post-modern woman tried to merge feminism with domestic discipline.

That integration of domestic discipline and feminism may be difficult; it becomes evident in a story told of Prince Albert in his potentially awkward relationship with Queen Victoria. Although Albert had no inherent position in government, when the two were alone, he only had one question: Was he addressing Victoria as queen

or as wife? If she were queen, he was the obeisant subject. Conversely, if she were wife, he was her husband.

Whether Victoria was ever spanked—which she may well have been on occasion given the attributes of the age that bears her name—is less important than the model her dual role offers to women who have achieved positions of responsibility in the workplace. For domestic discipline to work, women have to let men *take charge*. It requires a rethinking—even *leaving it at the door*—that many women find difficult if not impossible. The result is matrimonial carnage.⁵³

“DON’T GO INTO YOUR CAVE, GET OUT YOUR PREFERRED IMPLEMENT!” (1 OCTOBER 2003)

A girlfriend of mine phoned for a heart-to-heart last night. She'd had a big argument with her husband the day before and things had not improved. “I am so tired of feeling like the bad guy here. Why am I always the one in the wrong? He's mad at me, and he is in his cave... and he's been there for over 24 hours.”

What is it with some men? Needing to go into their cave and all that? Is it me or is this cave idea of John Gray simply another name for sulking and punishing by angrily withdrawing? When a man simply needs to be alone (as indeed, when a woman needs to be alone) it would never occur to anyone to call it “going into his cave”, would it? My friend's husband could have smiled at her and kissed her and mentioned that he felt the need to be alone for a

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while. Instead, he looked daggers at her and stonewalled her and withdrew, leaving her feeling hurt and frustrated and punished. It's all very well to give that a fancy name and make it sound good, but let's call a spade a spade and see it for what it is: punitive sulking.

Don't get me wrong: I think there is a lot to be said for ending an interaction when it has gone bad and starting afresh a little later, rather than letting it spiral down into even greater ugliness. But this is not that. When the man is in his cave, he is exuding silent anger, punishing the woman every bit as effectively as if he were shouting at her.

Admittedly, another friend of mine has said that she finds John Gray's cave idea really helps her not to get upset when her husband is in a mood (now he is just "in his cave" and she doesn't take it personally so much) but in many cases, women are not quite so able to feel great when their husbands are "in his caves", and when I see men behaving like this, I feel like telling them to grow up, and come out of the damn cave!

One man I know who recently left his wife said that his wife left him in his cave, and he stayed there so long he forgot that his wife was outside! How many women bravely wait outside the damn cave, even though they would like to feel close again... while all the time their husbands ache just as much as they do for connection but are unable to express it?

This whole cave thing is as typical of the average relationship as it is destructive. One of the benefits of

the sort of relationship described on Taken In Hand is that there is a better way to handle such problems—one that draws the two people together instead of pulling them apart. Here's how one woman described it to me recently:

"In the days before my husband got smart about the kind of relationship I want, our life together was a lot less peaceful. He would get angry and sulk for hours or days, and I would be frozen out. Then I would get angry and freeze him out in turn. It was hell. It wasn't easy getting through to my husband about what I want. For some reason he didn't believe I was serious when I first told him. What I like is for him to be in charge. I like to feel his authority and power on a daily basis, and I like him to discipline me if he feels I've stepped out of line. I finally got through to him after we had a major row and he stormed off and shut himself in the bedroom. I decided to act. I grabbed a wooden spoon and followed him to the bedroom. Handing him the wooden spoon, I told him that if he felt as angry as he seemed, he should put me over his knee, and that it might make him feel better. Initially, he refused, and sent me away, but later that night, he called me back to the bedroom and had me lie face down on the bed, and he gave me the beating of my life. At first he was still angry and silent but after several blows, which made me cry out in pain, but which I submitted to, he seemed to start to relax. I thought he would never stop, but still I submitted. Without going into too many details, let's just say that this ended with

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highly charged emotions, tears, and extreme passion. That was followed by an intimate talk which resolved our issues with ease. Now he shocks friends by joking that he firmly believes that a good beating is the answer to many a married man's problems."

That man may have been joking but there is some truth in what he says. Obviously, it would be wrong for a husband to do something like this if his wife prefers an ordinary equal relationship with no control and no "discipline". But for women who like the idea of being taken in hand, it is often infinitely preferable to receive a sound beating than it is to suffer the destructive punishment of the man "going into his cave". Consensual physical discipline brings the couple together. It is an intimate act, and often leads on to another kind of intimacy. Going into your cave puts up barriers; getting out the wooden spoon breaks down barriers and makes you feel close, which then makes it possible to talk with understanding and resolve the issue in a way that is not possible when tempers have flared and you are in fighting mode. So you could say that putting your wife over your knee is a way of getting the fight over and the talking started.⁵⁴

"WHITE HOT INTENSITY AND BOUNDLESS JOY" (2 OCTOBER 2003)

Just why am I doing this anyway? I seem to be on this clear path of being happy. The thought of becoming more submissive is or would be an enhancement of what we already

have. I feel that I am not a naturally submissive person. I have never been one, and it is only in this relationship I have discovered submission. And the power I feel in being loved this intensely, the incredible connection. If this is to be intensified through my becoming submissive all the time, then I want some.

This submission is not about me not being able to make decisions. This is not about me losing my spontaneity, nor momentary flings of madness. That is joy. This is about when we are together, or about to be together, my head wraps around just that. As it is, he gives permission for most of my daily events. Not that I am always that good at listening. He doesn't choose my clothes, although tells me what he'd like to see, and I decide what that means.

We have talked about how far does one fall into submission. And he tells me that never am I going to lose myself. That's the best part for him. Me. And he says it's too precious to lose, or tamper with. He knows my background. He knows that if I feel the tiniest bit of danger, I can withdraw so fast, it can take days to get me back. That's not what we want here. I guess the best way to describe it, is to equate submission with sexuality. I want to become and feel more sexually intense, and if that comes through submission, or my submitting to my husband, then I will find it.

And I question. If I feel I can't live with something, then it's arranged until I can. This is about being happy, for both of us. Gary has a fantasy of having me submissive full time. I

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will happily go with this until it feel uncomfortable or it is something I cannot live with. But as it is right now, I can live with this. It is very, very hot.⁵⁵

"QUIET AUTHORITY" (3 OCTOBER 2003)

Quiet authority... a man must know who he is, and then gently, but *very* firmly be able to lead me—reassuring me at all times. I can't bear to be yelled at—I will turn and run, but a man who speaks softly, no matter what he is saying to me, will always hold my attention. I may not obey!! (grin) But I *will* listen!

Knowing he is noticing me, and is aware of my needs and emotional standing, is reassuring and safe. I also want to obey him, and can't bear to disappoint him.

If someone gives me a direct order, I kinda wonder what planet he's from, but if he lets me know his wishes, gently, firmly, and that his concern is for me and our relationship, then I will always follow his lead.

As for a man who can laugh and cry with me—I do *not* believe that a man who shows his vulnerability with me, in private, is weak. On the contrary, he has great strength and a tender heart that I will follow, willingly.⁵⁶

"FINDING A GOOD MAN" (4 OCTOBER 2003)

An internet friend of mine recently wrote me an anguished email message saying that she is now single and that she has no idea where all

the good men are. "I seem to attract only submissive men who want to be led around by the nose," she complained. This friend is one of a surprisingly large number of women who yearn for a strong man who will, at least in some ways, be in control... "not the way your average control freak is in control," she says, "but in a way which increases the intimate connection between the man and woman." She says she finds control erotic, "but I'm not at all interested in BDSM and have no desire to be anyone's slave or servant. Nor do I want a man who requires unquestioning obedience. I'm a modern woman who wants a modern relationship (i.e., one in which each partner supports the other's work and dreams) but one enriched by control dynamics." Unfortunately, her search has so far drawn a blank.

If you are a woman in this situation, unfortunately, I think you will find it difficult at best finding a suitable partner, especially over the internet. Truth is, there are a lot of men who are on the Internet playing games. Some are playing several women at the same time. If ever confronted over their behavior, some of these men react with tactics of control. You know, the old "You're not submissive enough if you don't trust me" sort of crap. I think men who do that to women are weasels (at best). Just MHO but I'll stick to it. Many men you will meet on the internet are married, just living out some sort of fantasy and stringing whoever they can along for the ride. Often times, it is expensive for women only in terms

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of time and sometimes lost real opportunities. Other times, it is outright dangerous. Pay real attention to details. Listen to the man's actions, not just his words. If his actions belie his words, believe his actions, not his words.

To find a man who has the qualities you seek, you will likely need to look in unlikely places, paying attention to apparent innate intelligence rather than any claim they may have to actually knowing anything. One thing not to overlook is where you met the last man you were with. One woman I know of, frustrated with her experience on the internet, took the old fashioned approach and went to her address book, finding single men or old friends now divorced for some time. She picked out the ones she had some attraction to. This makes absolute sense because emotional attraction is sexual and it is likely that sexual attraction is speaking from the same sexuality.

I suggest that you carefully look in the erotic community, YOU contacting men and not the other way around. Look for intelligence and clarity of thought rather than giving that much of a hoot if he "has it right". Better to find someone who might be very open to what you want rather than someone who has preconceptions, because such preconceptions could hamper the development of the sort of relationship you want. Don't expect anyone to already have exactly the same ideas as you have. There are spanking websites which have personal ads. Check out personal home pages with appropriate search phrases.

Even if you are looking for a man interested in control more broadly than just spanking, I still think the best place to look is in men with strictly erotic backgrounds—men who enjoy erotic spanking. The reason for this is that the kind of control needed is normally specific to the woman. I believe that anyone who genuinely enjoys eroticism is wired for this sexually and can gain the necessary control dynamics. The trouble is that sometimes the whole thing gets out of whack and the man becomes a control freak. Avoid men who have preconceptions about obedience and submission, because the control they offer will not be pleasant.

My basic premise here, and the reason I believe erotic experience only is preferable, is that the control dynamic of discipline needs to develop and evolve as part of your relationship specific interaction. Men who like to spank would by their nature easily take on intimate discipline/control dynamics the way we explain them. These men would have trouble with the "behavior modification" approach, but that is inherently absurd anyway. An erotic spanker could easily understand that control dynamics would enrich the intimate experience. And as someone sexually inclined towards spanking, he would have this as a natural quality in his personality. How it developed would depend on how you related to each other.⁵⁷

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"THE NIGHT THAT CHANGED OUR MARRIAGE FOR EVER" (5 OCTOBER 2003)

My husband and I have been married for 31 years. In the beginning, there was no "discipline". Then after a few years, by chance, my husband put me over his knee for a joke. From there, it was initially just occasional spanking for fun, nothing serious. After about ten years of being married and developing a pattern of arguing with each other, often about the same things, I got home after my evening class one night to find that my husband was mad at me.

I had gone out after class with some of my classmates and it was late when I got home. This was a bone of contention because I would often be late getting the kids to school next morning when I did that, plus he said it was a single person's behavior, not the way a married woman should behave. We used to argue about it but he never did anything until this one night... which changed our marriage for ever. That night, he was mad. He said that what I needed was an old fashioned over the knee spanking and he did just that.

At first I was angry and resisted but the truth is, I wanted him to take me in hand. I wanted him to care enough to stop me behaving like a single woman. I wanted him to put his foot down and assert himself. When he finished spanking me that first time, I clung to him and cried my eyes out..... and then I fell asleep in his arms while he stroked my head and kissed me. Next morning, I

felt a sense of peace and love I'd never felt before. I think I'd wanted him to do that for a very long time, and I was acting out more and more to get a reaction out of him. Not consciously, but looking back with hindsight I think I was pushing and testing all the time until that night.

Since that night, things have been a lot more peaceful around here. Spankings don't happen very often, but they do still happen, even now, after 31 years of marriage. And when I look at my husband, I still to this day get a rush of love for him. Don't think that when you've been together this long, the passion's gone. It's not. We're still hot for each other. If anything, we have a more passionate marriage now than we did in the first decade. I think that's down to my husband having started asserting himself and putting me over his knee when the need arises (or sometimes just for fun). It makes me feel safe and protected and loved so very much. Why doesn't everybody do it?⁵⁸

"TOTAL OBEDIENCE?" (6 OCTOBER 2003)

I was asked: "Do you think that the woman should be obedient at all times, in the sense that, aside from playful disobedience, she obeys without question come what may?" If we assume that in the relationship the man is in charge, is dominant etc. and the woman is submissive etc. then this would only make sense if the man *always* knew better than the woman, and if there was never a good reason for the woman to act

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independently or in ways which were contrary to what her man wanted at the time.

Since men are never this all-knowing, and women are never this clueless and useless on their own, this is a simplistic situation—a cartoon cardboard cut-out of how a relationship should be. It is clear that this holds many attractions for some people—the drama and simplicity of complete domination etc. I have just been reading the profiles of a bunch of kinky Melbourne women—and some of them are very explicit and demanding in wanting a man to take complete and detailed charge of them.

I think that for all but the most extreme individuals, this is not what they actually want, day-to-day, in their best, sanest, mind. Nonetheless there's a great thrill in thinking about something like this—being totally dominated, totally protected, totally controlled, totally used etc. Likewise there's a thrill for some man in thinking about this.

I think most people want more in their life than domination and submission. But there are some people, women and men, who seem to seriously seek out lives of complete submission and servitude. I think they are very lucky to find someone who is wise and strong enough to provide them with everything they need, financially and emotionally. A person who can do this must be fully functioning in many ways—and I think only a subset of such healthy people would want to live a life as the sole keeper, supporter and dominant of a dependent person. Either the dependent person has nothing

else going for them—so why would the dominant bother, except for selfish or pet-keeping-like reasons—or the submissive has all sorts of strengths and qualities—in which case why would a healthy, wise, dominant go along with them not engaging properly with the world?

It simply feels *good* for many people who are females or thinking and feeling in a feminine way to be protected, led, disciplined etc. Likewise it feels good for the man—or a person who is thinking and feeling in ways which are typically masculine—to protect, lead and perhaps punish his woman.

I think the wisest position—one which is adopted by couples who I think have really made the most of DD and many other aspects of their lives—is that each partner defers to the other depending on who is likely to be wisest and most stable in all the circumstances. For instance, if the man is tired or ill, then he defers to the judgement of the woman. Also, in fields where the woman has greater knowledge and skills, the man defers to her. This is all perfectly natural, but it is more complex and less satisfyingly dramatic than “100% domination”, total submission etc.

A “total obedience” situation puts all the responsibility on the man—he has to make all the decisions and get them all right, because there is no other pathway for making decisions. While women and some men may get hot and horny thinking about such arrangements, I don't imagine that many actually live this way 24 hours a day.

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Not only is the 100% obedience arrangement a terrible responsibility for the man, it is also a really unhealthy arrangement for him as well. It seems that humanity generally turns ugly or at least unfocused and inefficient when there are no guides or boundaries—when there is no clear positive or negative feedback. In a small business, there are short feedback paths, involving time delays of seconds to hours or days. In large businesses, or in governments, there are many barriers to feedback, and multiple levels which involve distortions, barriers and time delays lasting days to years. Feedback, especially negative feedback so you can correct mistakes and stay on track, is essential for virtually all human activities. Yet it seems that the 100% obedience arrangement could lead some men and women into a situation where there is little feedback, so things could go way wrong before someone really notices.

It is also possible that with some individuals the 100% power does things to their thoughts and emotions which are unhealthy and lead them to be mistaken, or develop selfish thoughts, feelings and actions.⁵⁹

"DOMINANT TO THE LAST" (7 OCTOBER 2003)

He sat in the king size chair that only a few months ago had fit him as though it had been intentionally created as his throne. Now it seemed to dwarf his thin, almost frail form. The agony of his disease had deeply

etched his already craggy features and haunted his eyes.

She knew he hated to see her cry, yet tears flowed unbidden and unchecked as she watched her beloved fading before her very eyes. The doctors had long since given up any hope of his recovery, and now all they would give her to help him was the morphine he hated so much. It eased his pain but made it unbelievably difficult to speak.

He shifted slightly and a grown escaped from deep within him.

She leaned over to squirt another dropperful of the vile liquid under his tongue, knowing that as it eased his pain it would also slow his already labored breathing and hasten his final parting from her. Guilt washed over her. He was so strong, a warrior who had valiantly battled the ravaging disease for years longer than the doctors had ever believed was possible, and here she was—his mate, his lady, his beloved Babygirl—giving him the pain-relieving poison that would numb his keen mind and dull his senses.

Choking back the sobs that once again threatened to wrack her body, she gently kissed the top of his head and whispered, "I'm sorry, my Love."

He heard the guilt in her voice—the guilt he had spent years spanking out of her. Suddenly the dullness was gone from his eyes. His eyebrow lifted sharply, his eyes flashed with the familiar sparks of controlled anger, and his voice resonated with authority and passion.

"Kathryn, do NOT do that to my Baby!!"

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Goosebumps flushed her body and a familiar shiver ran up and down her spine. Death like quicksand sucked at his body, yet his spirit was unvanquished. Her submission to him had not been quickly or easily won. In the beginning, fierce battles of will had raged between them, but he had unfailingly prevailed. He had conquered her will and won her heart. Now her acquiescence to his unquestioned authority came as naturally as the beating of her heart.

"Yes, my Love," she sighed as she sank to her knees in front of him and lay her head in his lap. "That's my good girl," he whispered as he gently stroked her hair.

They were the last coherent words he ever spoke to her. He had maintained his dominance to the very last.⁶⁰

"A NEED FOR CONTROL" (8 OCTOBER 2003)

My husband and I have been married a total of 27 years (two of those years we went through a divorce) and we have been in a domestic discipline relationship for about 2 years.

I have learned there are mainly three types of submission from a very nice couple on another site. Obedience, service, and control submission. I am a holistic woman and have a bit of all three types in me, with the majority, at this time of my life, being control. I need my head of the household to be very involved in my life. I need him to take control. I have only one steadfast rule that is: don't break the con-

nection. At the moment we are working on a few rules around a diet I need to be on for my health. For the most part rules or obedience don't sit well with me. I am much more a control type person. Service at this time in my life is a give-and-take thing with the head of my household. I work more hours than he does most weeks, and am pretty tired most nights. We serve each other.

For me the control is the most important part. It makes me feel safe and very loved. I need him to be involved in my life, to know what I am doing, to give input, to suggest, to congratulate, and to tell me when I am off base. The type of dominance or how he exerts the control is not as important as the control itself.

My husband spans me for fun and for discipline. I have a very real need! Another woman might just need to feel her man's control in her life and that is it. Or she may later develop a need for him to express that control in different ways including a spanking. Every woman is different.⁶¹

"THE SWEETEST 'BENEVOLENT DICTATORSHIP' EVER" (9 OCTOBER 2003)

It was my second husband, Darrell, who introduced me to this lifestyle. Darrell and I connected through a personals ad. We wrote to one another daily over a period of five months. Darrell was a numbers person and estimated we each wrote over 350,000 words in that time. We also made audio tapes for one an-

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other, and we exchanged pictures—we never talked on the phone (decided right away it would be cost prohibitive!!). We never met. At the end of the five months, he closed his barber shop in Texas, gave away everything he couldn't sell or fit into an extended pick-up, and headed north to Washington State to be with me.

We shared the background of past marriages that were void of any communication—both of us were loquacious, expressive personalities—and we had discussed in depth every topic imaginable. Yet meeting in person was still a shock—and he moved right in with me. We had agreed to sleep in separate rooms at first—but that didn't last long!

I had been attracted to my first husband because I believed he was strong. What I discovered after we married is that he was a powerful controller who was threatened and intimidated by my strength. He solved his problem by doing everything in his power to crush and break my spirit—and nearly succeeded.

It was after my suicide attempt that I started my word study on submission—though I truly figured at the time that it was wasted effort. I had decided by then that men fell into two categories: the weak and/or passive ones who enjoyed women walking all over them and the powerful, controlling ones who only wanted to crush and break one's spirit.

Darrell was a shock to me on every level and in every way. Neither of us had ever heard of the term DD (domestic discipline). I only encountered it myself four years after I lost him to cancer. He called what we had a Benevolent Dictatorship. For us, it was something that evolved quite naturally, starting with a first spanking that evoked powerful reactions in both of us.

He had only been here for about three weeks. I was having difficulty adjusting to his attitude—he was so damned bossy and arrogant—yet because of the situation, he wasn't comfortable pushing me too far. It was a long way back to Texas and he had pretty much shut those doors behind him.

This particular day, we had decided to take the bus to town to do some shopping. We really have a wonderful bus system here and the landscape is incredible. But he had been grating on my nerves all morning with his bossy attitude and finally I snapped. I charged out the door and rushed down the street to the bus stop. Darrell never rushed anywhere—but he had long legs that could out-stride me two to one easily. Several times he ordered me to wait up for him, but I was having none of it. I reached the bus stop just ahead of him—and just as the bus pulled up a couple of minutes early. I hopped on and took a seat. He was right behind me and sat down beside me. He tried to take my hand—but I yanked it away from him.

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Then he had the audacity to tell me if I didn't behave myself, he was going to turn me over his knee right there in front of God and country. I really wasn't certain if he meant it or not— $\frac{1}{2}$ in this state he could easily go to jail for taking such an action—but I abhor public scenes, so I let him hold my hand. I turned my head away and glared out the window the entire trip, plotting.

When the bus stopped downtown, he stood up to let me out first. I dashed off the bus and hit the ground at close to a dead run. He was still very unfamiliar with our town, so I easily lost him—which was my intent. I finished my shopping and got on the next bus home.

The buses run every 30 minutes here, and it was exactly one half hour after I got home that he opened the front door. I was standing in the center of the living room when that door opened. I was struck by two things—he seemed to fill the entire doorway (I had never really noticed just how BIG he was before) and the look on his face. It made me freeze right where I was. He strode across the room, grabbed my arm and pulled me over to the sofa. Normally, I am a fighter from the get-go, but something about his demeanor made my intuition scream that this would most definitely not be a good time to fight.

He sat down in the center of the sofa and in the same move, pulled me down across his lap. Then I felt his hand reach into my pants and

start to pull them down. That galvanized me into action—but too late. There was a band of steel across my back. I tried as hard as I could to get away, but I was stuck.

The shock of that first hard slap on my bare bottom was unbelievable and I was bloody furious! But it didn't faze him. I went from blazing rage and demands that he stop to tears and sobs. It didn't matter—he was determined to thoroughly blister my behind. Then as suddenly as he had started, he stopped. He turned me over, took my chin in his big old paw and made me look at him. It was the first sound he had made since he had walked in the door. His expression was deadly serious and his tone of voice was so calm and intense at the same time that it sent shivers right through me and straight into my soul. He said, "I STRONGLY suggest that you never pull another stunt like that again."

As shattering as that was, it was nothing compared to what happened next. He pulled me so close to him I could hardly breathe, and sat there holding and rocking me until I quit crying and was all calmed down. I will never be able to adequately explain what I was feeling just then, but the closest I can come is that for the very first time in my life I knew what home and safe meant.

I wish I could say it was smooth sailing from there, but it just wouldn't be the truth. I am an aggressive fighter, a warrior by nature and

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temperament, and I was determined to make certain he wasn't deceiving me—that he didn't truly fall into one of my preconceived ideas about men. I pushed and tested and challenged in every way possible, but he was undaunted. The only thing that ever seemed to suffer was my bottom. The turning point for me happened in one night. I wanted desperately to yield to his love, but I was so scared of being hurt again. He was lecturing me about something—I really don't remember what. The man was ALWAYS lecturing me, or so it seemed. He reached out to stroke my face and I bit his hand hard. I was over his knee with my bottom naked so fast it made me dizzy. But he didn't do anything for what seemed to be an eternity. That damned band of steel wouldn't let me up, but he was doing nothing. Then suddenly his voice got that terrible calm intensity to it and he said, "I (and he emphasized it with a resounding slap that sounded like my dad's handgun going off and felt like it went clear through me) don't (another slap) care (another) if (again) it (you get the idea) takes a lifetime, I am going to prove to you I love you with all my heart and all my Soul and you are mine forever."

Without any prior plans having been made, we were married one week later (I had refused until then). As far as I was concerned, he had conquered my will, won my respect and stolen my heart. I was his—heart, mind, body and Soul. Under-

stand—I am not saying I was instantly docile and obedient—I never came close! But I was his Lady and he was my Hero.⁶²

"MS. DAMEN (SHOULD BE) TAKEN IN HAND (I JEST!)" (10 OCTOBER 2003)

Ms. Damen feels so dirty after reading Karen's piece* that she feels the need to take a shower. "I honestly thought drivel like this only popped up in Penthouse letters," she fumes. Hmmm, Penthouse letters, eh? Presumably the implication is that Karen's piece is intended to be erotic.

Imagine my surprise, then, when I read Ms. Damen's next stinging blow (oops, no allusion to spanking intended):

Now normally, I don't bother myself with this sort of thing. I'm a whatever-floats-your-boat kind of person.

...as long as it's on Ms. Damen's approved list of boat-floating activities.

I should probably also make clear that I don't care if couples get into spanking *for fun*. What is being described in the post, however, isn't spanking for fun. (Read the whole thing if you doubt me.)

Doesn't this contradict Ms. Damen's first statement that Karen's piece was like a letter in Penthouse? I assume there aren't too many letters in Penthouse that *aren't* intend-

* "The night that changed our marriage for ever," 5 October 2003.

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ed to be for fun, but not being a regular reader, I'll have to be guided by Ms. Damen on that. She continues:

It's spanking *as discipline*, spanking that presumes a husband's right to determine what is and is not acceptable behavior from his wife.

Does it? Is that what it means? Let's see, what does it say on this site about this sort of "discipline"? Read what Karen says. This "discipline" is something she *wanted*, something she wanted so much that she acted out more and more until her husband got the message that she craved this kind of control. Sure, maybe it would have been better had she just told him that's what she wanted, but when Karen writes that she wanted it, how is it that you read non-consent, Ms. Damen? Is it that you think you know best what other people should want? Is it that if they want something other than what you approve of, you jump to the conclusion that they can't really want it? Surely Karen should be the judge of what she wants, not you.

Notice how Karen stresses the love, the peace and the passion of her very long term marriage. That's pretty good going isn't it? How many couples married that long feel those things and to the degree Karen evidently does? Who are you to judge her?

Do you want a daddy? Or a husband?

Is Karen being treated badly, like a child? Or is she loving her relationship and her husband just as they are?

Because, you see, the above post excerpt doesn't describe to me a husband at all.

You don't like the sound of it, so it's not ok for Karen to like it? What happened to "whatever floats your boat", Ms. Damen? Are you aware of how widespread the desire for this sort of relationship is? Are all the women who enjoy being taken in hand in need of therapy?

And I admit, I get the queasy, turning-in-the-stomach feeling from people who blur the two roles like this. All I can think is: If it's not all right for fathers to have sex with their daughters, as though they were wives, why is it any more right or natural for husbands to discipline their wives, as though they were daughters?

That is begging the question, Ms Damen. This is not about being treated like a child, it is about being treated like a woman, the way that individual woman *wants* to be treated. It is consensual. It is what floats her boat. In the case of a child, there is no choice, no escape, no consent. (Hmmmmm...)⁶³

"CREATING AN UNBREAKABLE BOND OF LOVE TAKES TIME" (10 OCTOBER 2003)

I have always had fantasies. Strong images of being loved, but being stopped. Not stopped in a controlling or negative way. But stopped with loving limits, and then if necessary, being spanked. I had always considered this a sexual fantasy, but

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somewhere there was a grain of truth. After all, I wanted to be loved.

My entire life was mixed with the wrong type of man. I kept choosing muscle for strength. When I met Gary, he was clearly on to me. But he probed and prodded and was able to take my unrefined ideas and create a reality and distinct personalities for us. And in doing so, created us a wonderful life. He started by establishing a very strong "unbreakable bond" of love.

Through this entire process he also put in place his clear role of authoritarian and Head of our House. He knew I would need time to adjust to this dynamic, and always explained what he was doing although left little wiggle room for challenge. We were both sensitive to each other's needs, but Gary made it clear that my needs were to met first. If not, I was quick to ignore myself. And that in itself was the same as disrespecting Gary. As much as I needed him to hold me accountable, I still needed to adjust to the actual events. Or as I often heard, "for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction". It didn't take long for that to make sense. He was patient. I fell into trusting him to make the decisions, knowing he always took my feelings into account before making them final. He always validated me.

It was a year before he spanked me. I wanted him to and he was taking his time! This was the final piece to my fantasy and he was moving slowly. He started by spanking me erotically peppered with infractions, and for the longest time, left me wanting more. I suppose that since my style is not one of misbe-

having or being "bad" that my biggest challenge was pushing limits. Gary was clear to make my limits hard or I was forever looking for the loophole.

I am a very organized person and have no problems running my life and household. So for us, even though spanking is used for some behavior, it is more widely used for connection. Even if I have been naughty, and Gary spansks me for discipline, it still seems to fall under the connection umbrella as we are so close afterwards.

And then there is the exploration of my submission. Many a very hard spanking falls under this category. The emotional output has never been too taxing on either one of us. We both seem to thrive on the love and interest we share. And of course we both realize that life has its invasions from time to time and some bumps do occur. But Gary is so consistent in his observations of me that a small bump is merely an inconvenience, or sometimes a breather. But it is a lifestyle and we are both committed.⁶⁴

"TAKEN IN HAND IN A NUTSHELL" (12 OCTOBER 2003)

Welcome to Taken In Hand, a website about wholehearted sexually-exclusive marriages in which the husband wears the trousers and is firmly in charge (to his wife's delight!)-and he always puts his wife and their relationship first. Putting her and the relationship first is the key to creating a marriage in which the man is in control in a good,

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healthy and sustainable way. Taken In Hand wives tend not to claim to be submissive (though their husbands may well consider them to be so) but they do respect, honour and appreciate their husbands and strive to please them. [...] ⁶⁵

"REACHING OUT BY OFFERING YOURSELF" **(12 OCTOBER 2003)**

I have read marvellous descriptions on the internet of how a sharp slap (or several!) to the woman's bottom can sometimes bring the woman back into connection with her partner if she is beginning to withdraw psychologically. Somehow, it snaps the two people back into a tender, loving connection.

The same is true (or can be) if it is the man who is the one withdrawing. Whilst I am not ruling out spanking the man, that is not what I am talking about here. I am suggesting that the act on the woman's part of submissively offering him her bottom to receive a spanking can snap the two of them back into that precious connection.

Kathy once pointed out that a loving husband who realises the underlying cause of such a problem need not think of this slap as correcting bad behaviour. "If his wife drove the car into a ditch and couldn't get it out," she explained, "he'd help, wouldn't he? In a sense, his wife's brain has gotten into a ditch and she needs his help to get it back on the road again."

Similarly, it does not matter if you disagree with your man, or you think he is being unreasonable or

completely silly. At such times, you are probably thinking that if anyone deserves punishment, it is your man, not you, and that might well be true, but it does not follow that you have to view offering yourself in such a negative light. You don't have to think of it as accepting punishment for your man's bad behaviour. You don't have to see it as "unfair". If you are offering your bottom, you don't have to feel in any way distressed by it. Instead, you can view it as a Taken In Hand form of reaching out to the man you love, making it possible for him to "get back on the road again", as Kathy said. You can view it as a gift not just to your man but to yourself too, because in doing this, you can take pleasure in your strength—you are being the "Big Person" here—as well as in the reestablished intimate connection. It is in your interests (and not just because it might turn out to be erotic).

This is a powerful way to stop any descent into The Silent Treatment. And when you start using it, you not only feel good about successfully repairing the connection on the occasions it gets shaky, you also find that there are fewer episodes in which the connection gets shaky, and that the episodes themselves are much less serious.

For anyone whose beloved is not Mr Perfect, but who is still worthy of your love, I recommend this approach, if you can view it the way I have suggested. (If not, then obviously, don't do it!)

I hope no one will think I am advocating manipulative control here. Attitude is important, and I am specifically suggesting taking this action

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in a non-defensive, compassionate, loving, submissive spirit, as a way of reaching out in good faith—as a way to end any brewing trouble or bad feeling. Wanting to regain or strengthen a shaky connection is not manipulative. Both of you want to feel close. Neither of you want to feel bad, angry, upset, etc. But when something has gone wrong and there is bad feeling brewing between you, someone has to step out of the vicious circle and reach out for the connection. You might find that if you take that step, your man will be grateful and glad that you did and respond so positively that you will certainly not regret that you did.⁶⁶

"IS THIS A VICTORY?" (13 OCTOBER 2003)

Power and Love quotes this interesting article* from *Salon.com*:

"Women secretly want men with authority, but they fall for insecure passive-aggressive guys who view every aspect of life as a power struggle, or for cranky killjoys or petty sadists [...] The women have won, if you've won when you have worse sex than your grandmother did. Secretly they don't find these men very exciting, either. And they don't feel feminine when they're with them. [...] What's often lost in the insistence on equality is quality—how the people feel about each other, how much love they can give each other. We now feel

queasy about the romantic language of our ancestors, who used the metaphors of slavery and devotion unabashedly. But is there another language with which to speak of love? Love does involve two people putting themselves in the power of each other. [...] The heterosexual act of love does involve women putting themselves literally in the power of men. And we no longer trust enough to do so."⁶⁷

"WHEN I'M IN OVERDRIVE..." (14 OCTOBER 2003)

Often my husband is very busy with business. Particularly now, he has been very busy at work with his corporate year end, combined with his predictions of numbers for next year. He has not been spending a lot of time with me.

When I am left to my own devices, and the world at large has me making executive decisions that require modified changes, I start to rev up. I start to think faster, expect things to happen to me faster, and start to process faster. I also start to see things faster, and I come to feel pressured. All this is not really happening, it is simply my perception.

Now, when Gary is readily available and I get to talk over events as they happen, he slows things down. We talk and I am given opportunity to voice my own thoughts and then come to a conclusion without feeling pressured.

When he is busy and not as available, I seem to move into overdrive. Now, he does eventually come home. He spends time observing me, and finding out just how fast I am working. He tells me I'm going

* See:
<<https://web.archive.org/web/20100520060054/http://www.salon.com/s-ex/feature/2003/10/01/marlowe>>

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too fast. He pins me with his eyes and tells me to slow down.

We both recognize that I need to unload, and I spend a day or so telling him everything that comes into my mind that I would like him to know, often important items.

Well, it seems I am at my happiest when my world is very small. Actually when my world is about 6'3", or Gary size. During our nightly transition he guides me into a relaxed state. I am stroked, talked to and gentled. Then I am taken into the bedroom where I am told to be very submissive. I am not to speak, I am now completely focused on what is expected of me.

I am usually spanked, or cropped, and often hard. It is in this connection, this ritual over his lap, the sensation of his hand stroking my bottom. His arms that I lay in and recover and connect and give up my busyness.

He asserts himself in the most gentle yet dominant of ways. So in a way, he solves my problem of not being my usual happy self, and brings me all the security I crave, establishes his role as leader and comforts us both by paying attention.⁶⁸

"THE TAMING OF THE SHREW" (15 OCTOBER 2003)

*"Thou must be married to no man but me,
For I am he born to tame you, Kate
And bring you from a wild Kate"*

- The Taming of the Shrew, by
William Shakespeare: Act II Sc
i. 277

A friend once described me as "a shrew longing to be tamed". Whilst I thought the "shrew" bit an egregious slur on my soft, sweet feminine nature, I confess that I found the "longing to be tamed" bit surprisingly perspicacious ~~for a man~~. (Oops, that just slipped out!)

Perhaps it will come as no surprise, therefore, to learn that my favourite Shakespeare play is *The Taming of the Shrew*, the one that not even the venerable Royal Shakespeare Company now dares to interpret correctly. They do, however, admit that "a recent box office survey suggests that it is Shakespeare's second most popular play with audiences at the RSC."

My guess is that this popularity owes very little to the current RSC production directed by Gregory Doran. As I watched this production in Stratford Upon Avon recently, I found myself wondering whether anyone involved had actually bothered to read the play and think about what it means. I was amazed by their misinterpretation. Women go to see *The Taming of the Shrew* because they are intrigued by the idea of Petruchio, the main male character, who is calm, confident, determined, and dominant, without having to appear intimidating or bullying. The RSC's current Petruchio is a bumbling, weak, incompetent fool who appears to fail entirely to tame the shrew, the title of the play notwithstanding. In 1988, Jonathan Miller said:

I think it's an irresponsible and silly thing to make that play into a feminist tract. It is not simply the high

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jinks of an intolerably selfish man who was simply destroying a woman to satisfy his own vanity, but a sacramental view of marriage.

And indeed, the production I recommend is the 1980s BBC TV one by Jonathan Miller. It is available on DVD and video in America, and (dramatically cheaper when I last looked) from the RSC online store in England. It is exquisite, full of famous faces, and stars John Cleese, of all people, as Petruchio.

In this masterful interpretation, Cleese is hilariously witty, as one would expect, but he is more than that. He manages to capture the full richness of Petruchio's character so well that even if you are not interested in *The Taming of the Shrew*, this production is worth seeing just for the evidence that Cleese is a phenomenally good actor. His Petruchio woos Katherina, the shrew, with gentleness and good humour backed by total confidence and a little highly politically-incorrect force at times. It never seems to occur to him that Kate might get the better of him, even when she is resisting most loudly and angrily. When at last she submits, he is tender and loving with her, and the passion between the two is evident.

To tempt you to consider seeing this fabulous production, here are some of my favourite lines from the play. Notice Katherina's sharp wit at the beginning... then read her final speech:

Petruchio says:

You lie in faith, for you are called plain Kate,

And bonny Kate, and sometimes Kate the curst:

But Kate, the prettiest Kate in Christendom,

Kate of Kate-hall, my super-dainty Kate,

For dainties are all Kates, and therefore Kate,

Take this of me, Kate of my consolation,

Hearing thy mildness praised in every town,

Thy virtues spoke of, and thy beauty sounded,

Yet not so deeply as to thee belongs,

Myself am moved to woo thee for my wife.

The dialogue continues with Kate replying:

Moved, in good time, let him that moved you hither

Remove you hence: I knew you at the first You were a movable.

Petruchio: "Why, what's a movable?" [One who is easily moved]

Kate: "A joint stool" [A stool made by a craftsman]

Petruchio: "Thou hast hit it: come sit on me."

Kate: "Asses are made to bear, and so are you." ["to bear" means to carry passengers, and also carry children i.e., she is taunting him by calling him an ass and a woman]

Petruchio: "Women are made to bear, and so are you" [bear children plus support a man during sexual intercourse]

Each time Katherina snaps at him, Petruchio ignores her snapping and mildly calls her "sweet Kate, gentle Kate" and tells her that he is going to marry her. Here is another fun bit:

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Petruchio: "Come, come you Wasp,
y'faith you are too angry"

Kate: "If I be waspish, best beware
my sting"

Petruchio: "My remedy is then to
pluck it out"

Kate: "I, if the fool could find it
where it lies"

Petruchio: "Who knows not where
a Wasp does wear his sting? In his
tail." [note the "tail" pun!]

Kate: "In his tongue?"

Petruchio: "Whose tongue?"

Kate: "Yours if you talk of tails, and
so farewell."

Petruchio: "What with my tongue
in your tail. Nay, come again, good
Kate, I am a Gentleman,"

Kate: "That I'll try."

She strikes him.

Petruchio: "I swear I'll cuff you if
you strike again."

And so the banter goes on, witty
riposte after witty riposte. Under-
terred, Petruchio says:

I find you passing [i.e., very] gentle:
'Twas told me you were rough, and
coy [i.e., disdainful], and sullen,
And now I find report a very liar:

For thou art pleasant, gamesome
[i.e., spirited, fun], passing courteous,
But slow in speech: yet sweet as
spring-time flowers.

Thou canst not frown, thou canst
not look askance,

Nor bite the lip, as angry wenches
will,

Nor hast thou pleasure to be cross
in talk:

But thou with mildness entertain'st
[i.e., receive] thy wooers,

With gentle conference [i.e., con-
versation], soft, and affable.

Why does the world report that
Kate doth limp?

Oh slanderous world: Kate like the
hazel twig

Is straight, and slender, and as
brown in hue

As hazelnuts, and sweeter than the
kernels:

Oh let me see thee walk: thou dost
not halt [i.e., limp]

After yet more banter, Petruchio
concludes:

Marry so I mean sweet Katherine in
thy bed:

And therefore setting all this chat
aside,

Thus in plain terms: your father
hath consented

That you shall be my wife; your
dowry agreed on,

And will you, nill you [i.e., whether
you like it or not], I will marry you.

Now Kate, I am a husband for your
turn [i.e., suitable for you],

For by this light, whereby I see thy
beauty,

Thy beauty that doth make me like
thee well,

Thou must be married to no man
but me.

For I am he am born to tame you
Kate,

And bring you from a wild Kate to
a Kate

Conformable as other household
Kates:

Here comes your father, never
make denial,

I must, and will have Katherine to
my wife.

[...]

Petruchio: "Father, 'tis thus, your
self and all the world

That talked of her, have talked
amiss of her:

If she be curst, it is for policy,

For she's not froward, but modest
as the Dove,

She is not hot, but temperate as the
morn,

For patience she will prove a se-
cond Grissell,

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And Romane Lucrece for her chastity:

And to conclude, we have agreed so well together,

That upon Sunday is the wedding day"

Kate: "I'll see thee hanged on Sunday first."

Gre: "Hark Petruchio, she says she'll see thee hanged first!"

Tra: "Is this your speeding? nay then goodnight our part."

Petruchio: "Be patient gentlemen. I choose her for myself,

If she and I be pleased, what's that to you?'

'Tis bargained twixt vs twain being alone,

That she shall still be curst in company.

I tell you 'tis incredible to believe

How much she loves me: oh the kindest Kate,

She hung about my neck, and kiss on kiss

She vied so fast, protesting oath on oath [i.e., kissed me for every kiss I gave her],

That in a twinkle she won me to her love.

Oh you are novices, 'tis a world to see

How tame when men and women are alone,

A meacocke [i.e., cowardly] wretch can make the curstest shrew:

Give me thy hand Kate, I will go unto Venice

To buy apparel 'gainst the wedding day [i.e., in anticipation of the wedding day].

Provide the feast father, and bid the guests,

I will be sure my Katherine shall be fine."

On their wedding day, he firmly takes control. A wedding feast has been prepared, but Petruchio announces that he and Kate will not be staying for the feast. To which Kate replies:

"Do what thou canst, I will not go today,

No, nor tomorrow, not till I please myself,

The door is open sir, there lies your way,

You may be jogging while your boots are green:

For me, I'll not be gone till I please myself."

But as she is about to march off defiantly to the wedding feast, Petruchio holds her back, saying:

"They shall go forward Kate at thy command, [...]

But for my bonny Kate, she must with me:

Nay, look not big, nor stamp, nor stare, nor fret,

I will be master of what is mine own."

To the others at the wedding, Petruchio explains:

"She is my goods, my chattels, she is my house,

My houshold-stuff, my field, my barn,

My horse, my ox, my ass, my any thing,

And here she stands, touch her whoever dare,

I'll bring mine action on the proudest he that stops my way in Padua:

Grumio Draw forth thy weapon, we are beset with thieves.

Rescue thy Mistress if thou be a man:

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Fear not sweet wench, they shall
not touch thee Kate,
I'll buckler thee against a Million."

In the final scene, Kate valiantly
defends their relationship in this
classic monologue:

"Thy husband is thy Lord, thy life,
thy keeper,
Thy head, thy sovereign:
One that cares for thee,
And for thy maintenance.
Commits his body
To painful labour, both by sea and
land:

To watch the night in storms, the
day in cold,

Whilst thou liest warm at home, se-
cure and safe,

And craves no other tribute at thy
hands,

But love, faire looks, and true obe-
dience;

Too little payment for so great a
debt.

Such duty as the subject owes the
Prince,

Even such a woman oweth to her
husband:

And when she is frorward, peevish,
sullen, sour,

And not obedient to his honest will,
What is she but a foul contending
Rebel,

And graceless Traitor to her loving
Lord?

I am ashamed that women are so
simple,

To offer war, where they should
kneel for peace:

Or seek for rule, supremacy, and
sway,

When they are bound to serve,
love, and obey.

Why are our bodies soft, and weak,
and smooth,

Unapt to toil and trouble in the
world,

But that our soft conditions, and
our hearts,

Should well agree with our external
parts?

Come, come, you forward and un-
able worms,

My mind hath bin as big as one of
yours,

My heart as great, my reason hap-
pily more,

To bandy word for word, and
frown for frown;

But now I see our Lances are but
straws:

Our strength as weak, our weak-
ness past compare,

That seeming to be most, which we
indeed least are.

Then vale your stomachs, for it is
no boot,

And place your hands below your
husband's foot:

In token of which duty, if he please,
My hand is ready, may it do him
ease."

UPDATE: Adam, of singlesouth-ernguy.com, describes the above
article as:

"[A] quite delicious exploration of
one of the most loved Shakespearean
pieces of all time, *The Taming of the
Shrew*. [M]y personal favorite version
is the Richard Burton/Elizabeth Tay-
lor film."

Thanks, Adam! However, I fear I
must take issue with you on the Bur-
ton/Taylor version. Burton's
Petruchio is a most unattractive
drunken lout who shouts altogether
too much and has no finesse and no
subtlety whatsoever. He might as
well have been playing a gladiator
in one of those 1960s gladiator films.
I had the distinct impression that
Burton and Taylor were simply

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playing themselves, fighting non-stop, instead of playing Shakespeare's characters. That is not a compliment! It was tiring and uninteresting to watch, and horribly dated, I thought, what with the dreadful singing and other music. What am I missing?⁶⁹

"THE DUAL FAILURES OF MEN" (16 OCTOBER 2003)

Men are given to two curious—and seemingly contradictory—failures in dealing with women. On the one hand, they exhibit impatience, frequently characterized by expecting too much too soon. Then, given his impatience on the one hand, a man often exhibits a remarkable reluctance to spank the woman who tries his patience on the other.

That men are impatient is well known. From sex to shopping trips, women are often heard to complain about how little patience men exhibit.

What baffles a woman is the tolerance with which an otherwise often impatient man endures her womanly wiles. It is a curious behavior that women find to be at least as baffling—if not altogether as maddening—as the better-known penchant of males to be impatient.

The failure of a man to spank a provocative woman in a timely manner is but the reverse side of men's impatience in that men also often give too little too late. In this regard, there is a recurring theme in which a man—almost as living out

his own Greek tragedy—discovers the secret too late.

In one case, a writer whose wife was packing to leave him finally gave her the spanking he thought she had always deserved. Likewise, a famous Hollywood actor is said to have, at last, spanked his temperamental wife in the office of the lawyer handling their divorce!

In both instances briefly described above, that which the man did was—while neither episode brought further recriminations from the wife—insufficient to save his marriage. While, perhaps, not too little, the man's valiant efforts came too late.

Conversely, men have been known to spank early in the relationship without doing so with convincing vigor. The wife whose husband is not really getting through to her is not likely to plainly tell him, "Look, Honey, your limp wrist isn't getting it; what I really need is a good thrashing that'll remind me who's boss when I sit down tomorrow!" There are simply some things that a woman expects a man to figure out for himself—sometimes, in spite of her objections!

The failure of men in these two important areas may be traced to the same cause—a failure to pay attention. Women often drop subtle—and, sometimes, not so subtle—hints regarding their needs. The wise man learns to pay attention to these. The foolish man ignores them at great risk to the relationship.

Although rarely explicit, a woman will frequently give implicit permission to a man to do whatever is necessary to keep the relationship to-

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gether. She then expects him to act on her permission just as surely as if she put the implement in his hands and presented herself to be disciplined or punished at his pleasure. If the man fails to act in a timely fashion, whatever love the woman has for him will, in time, crumble into a loathing for which there is no human cure.

If she has not been abused, a woman wants to be handled. She craves the attention and protection of a man. To this end, she will pick a man whom she believes able to protect her from all else—including herself—and will remain loyal to her.

The man able to remain loyal, while dealing decisively with the woman's wiles, is the man of her dreams. Knowing such a man to be a rare catch in a fickle world, she will prize him above all else. It is strange that men have lost the capacity to understand what women have known all along.⁷⁰

"AMERICAN BEAUTY MEETS THE SURRENDERED WIFE" (16 OCTOBER 2003)

Picture the couple, laughing and talking. They share a poignant moment, and suddenly find themselves locked in a passionate embrace. It looks like they're going to really go for it...clothes are being tugged off, lips can't seem to hold still...until she looks over and says, "You're going to spill that beer on the couch."

This was a scene from *American Beauty*. For those who have seen it, didn't you just cringe when you saw

the behaviour of the wife? Have you ever cringed because you have found yourself acting or sounding like her?

Well, for controlling women, for women who feel like they married morons, who are disillusioned, feeling like the only adult in the house, feeling martyred, stressed out, and overwhelmed, there is help.

Help comes in the form of a paperback book called *The Surrendered Wife*, by Laura Doyle. The book discusses concrete ways to increase intimacy in your relationship, and help you recall why you married him in the first place. It advocates self-care: taking care of yourself so you're not so stressed out, and also to fill your time more so you're not waiting for hubby to make you happy.

The website for the book is a good place to begin. There are two chapters from the book excerpted there, and a quiz to see where you stand now in the controlling department. Remember, this is for you, so be as honest with yourself as possible.

Think about it: that couple from the movie, *American Beauty*, could have saved their marriage had they gone through with the lovemaking. Surrendering is about letting go of the things that don't matter quite so much, in favor of closeness and real intimacy with your spouse. OK, so it's an expensive couch. I'm sure it's Scotch-guarded, *And* it cleans up. Or the stain would be a lovely reminder of a wonderful time the two of them shared.⁷¹

"THE PATH" (17 OCTOBER 2003)

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Domestic discipline embraces the natural unity of masculine dominance and feminine submission. That forms a starting point. Dominance and submission. Words that have been contaminated by association with BDSM practices. Warped by the fear driven ideology of feminism. And in general, wholly and tragically misunderstood, across society, and the media which panders to it. (Though sometimes I think that it is the other way around.) So that the word dominate, immediately evokes either depraved or hurtful connotations. What is not immediately educed, are thoughts of masculine tenderness and support. Of love and intimacy. And so too the word submissive. What springs immediately to the mind of most are either the unregenerate images of BDSM, or negative associations of weakness, lack of self worth. Not a natural state of femininity, innate, bound to masculine dominance. Not strength, freedom and fulfilment. Yet in meaning this is surely the true essence of the word. As truly as that which is not evoked by the word dominate is the reality.

Let's look at BDSM first. Operating on the premise that dominance or submission is something which is adopted in much the same way that one would put on or take off a coat, it ignores completely any associations that would put these qualities as innate to gender. And then goes further. Totally ignoring the deep level of love and intimacy, necessary if a woman is to have submission drawn from her. Instead displaying all the moral vacuity in the interaction of the flesh of a swingers' party.

As a 6 foot male of 100kgs of muscle, the base physical reality is that I could take any woman I desired. Yet I would not do this. I would *never* hurt in such a manner. Yet physical reality is not changed by this. And so the idea of silly little girls, ensconced in their own private delusion, running around calling themselves mistress and dominatrix is one that always brings a smile to my face. (As too does the idea of ridiculous little boys running around calling themselves master. A wolf knows what it is and has no need to call itself such. I have looked upon a woman seeing the knowledge full in her eyes that I owned her, that same simple truth burning in my eyes for her too. Yet have never commanded to be called master. Nor had she any desire to. *She was mine*. An unalterable truth. Beyond such ludicrous classifications as master and slave.)

Then of course there are those areas which incorporate males who call themselves submissives, as well as the area inhabited by homo/bi/trans sexuality of both genders. Something so beyond my own ability to comprehend that to try to do so, is, for myself, akin to trying to imagine the social interplay of alien life on a planet on the other side of the galaxy.

It is regrettable that even within DD circles which eschew most of what BDSM incorporates, that the classifications of Dom and Sub have found frequent usage. For this speaks on the part of a woman that which is felt at an innate level is somehow unnatural, or at best a fetishistic kink. As a man I do not refer to myself as a man who desires

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a woman's body. For it does not need to be said. It is wholly superfluous. For that very desire I feel is the reason all of us exist today.

A man looking upon a woman with desire, wanting to take her. A woman looking upon a man with desire. Wanting to be taken.

In the same manner. A natural desire to be dominated by a male. To have submission drawn from her. Is wholly inherent to a woman, to the female animal she is. An animal, as much governed by these preordained innate characteristics as is the male animal.

A woman would not refer to herself as a woman with breasts. Yet the submission she feels arise within her in response to male dominance is as natural and innate a part of her. Yet feeling the need to justify what is felt, in the face of the lingering deleterious associations given by BDSM, feminism and general societal views, the self classification "Sub", which is tacitly apologetic, is given. Yet the reality is of course that a woman need not say such a thing. Need not say, "I am a submissive woman." But instead merely say, "I am a woman."

Then there are the views hammered into women by the feminazis, (who take the wholly amazing standpoint of saying a woman can be anything she wants to be [which is true], but only as long she wishes to be what we dictate she should want to be), that submission is inherently bad. That reliance upon a male is irrevocably weak. (Never minding the fact that a male in a wholly intimate union with a woman is just as reliant upon her, albeit

in a different manner, as different as masculine and feminine.) Such a view inspired by both a fear of masculinity, and the natural bond femininity creates as it merges with it, along with the dogmatic psychosis of lesbianism, has permeated society, albeit in a less shrill, strident form.

And yet a woman who is truly dominated, truly owned by a man, is not weak. Indeed she knows her greatest strength. Loved and supported, cherished. She is in a position to realise all her dreams. To be all that she can be. Wholly secure in her femininity, in her self worth. For that is what nurturing masculine dominance desires above all else.

I have drawn submission from women with my strength and dominance, yet never have I beheld weakness.

A domineering man however possessed of only weakness, seeks to suppress all that a woman might be. Hiding from his fears and insecurities and the deep self loathing they bring in the safety he feels at the delusion of power over another. A woman, victim of such a man, does not exist in a state of submission, rather subjugation. A strong, dominant man, knows who he is. And has no need to belittle his woman.

Something else which is also tragically misbelieved by so many women is the imagined idea that submission can be given. That it is their responsibility to give it whether to a husband or a boyfriend. A misbelief which occasions so many letters to DD lists. Women asking how they might do this, in the mistaken hope

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that they will be provided with some sort of magical key.

As a man I could not force myself to feel either desire or love for a woman for whom I felt nothing. Any more than I could force myself to feel anticipatory desire for a food which disgusts me (sushi), or force myself to feel that sensation of electricity poured down over the flesh of the spine and out along the limbs in response to a piece of music that speaks directly to my soul, when what assailed my ears held all the audible appeal of a cat being pulled backwards through a chain link fence.

So too a woman cannot force herself to feel submission. Anymore than she could force herself to feel any of these other emotions. A woman knows when she is in the presence of a *man*, as opposed to a little boy in an adult body. This knowledge is wholly helpless in its instinctual nature. As too is submission. When a woman feels submission drawn from her in response to a man's strength, dominance and tenderness, she stands wholly powerless in its path, swept away, consumed.

A woman has *no* responsibility to give submission to a man. Rather it is the man that must be possessed of the strength great enough to take hold of this her most precious of gifts and draw it from her. Correlating to this, a man cannot be taught to be dominant, to be strong, by a woman. A man must discover who he is and what he believes, and whether or not he has the courage to stand strong and alone against the world and pursue his desires, his

dreams, his truths. This is a journey of discovery that each man must walk alone.

Now we come to the issue of spanking. One that while not central to DD (a woman could be spanked for a thousand years by a man who did not cause submission to arise within her heart, and feel nothing but physical pain, whereas with one glance from the man to whom she *belongs*, she can feel submission arise within her so strongly that she trembles) is certainly an important component.

Why over the knees?

A question often asked.

We are physical beings and in the intimacies of the flesh, different positions evoke different emotional responses. Take sexual positions. The emotional response occasioned by the missionary position, one of tenderness and intimacy, differs greatly from that which is occasioned by the doggy position. Where raw animal passion and abandonment comes to the fore. No-one questions as to why this occurs. It is simply acknowledged that some physical positions will *naturally* arise different emotions within us. So too then the act of being taken across the knees, held there. It is a position which *naturally* evokes feelings of vulnerability, submissiveness, and surrender to masculine power within a woman. And feelings of dominance, possession and power within a man. But that is but one minor component. The physical pain that comes as the result of the spanking will, depending upon how the spanking is given (which is related directly to the reason for the spank-

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ing being given) evoke a wide range of emotional responses. From heated desire through to complete intimacy, security and reassurance.

It is at this point that distinction should be given between the two types of spankings. Those of punishment spankings. And those of Reassurance spankings. (Referred to by some as maintenance spankings. A term obviously coined by some half-wit. Maintenance is something you perform on a car. Not a woman.)

Punishment spankings occur when a woman without good reason, has been disobedient or disrespectful to the man to whom she belongs. And has broken a command that he has issued. When this behaviour occurs it is always known by a woman. And in such circumstances she must *always* receive a punishment spanking. *Always*.

Without consistency in enforcing what he himself has commanded of his woman, and taking her over his knees, a man wholly fails his woman, himself and their relationship. For when this does not occur, a woman is denied feeling the loving, nurturing, ever constant embrace of his dominance.

A punishment spanking is not to be taken lightly. And for the extreme physical pain they bring, coupled with the emotional pain at the feeling of having failed her man and herself, they are feared greatly by a woman. A fear which brings with it the knowledge that if by her behaviour she earns one, then there is nothing that she can do, either by way of pleading, or even physical

resistance, that will prevent her from receiving one.

In truth such spankings should be rare. For the disobedience that would occasion one to be given does not simply arise out of nowhere. And a man who is attentive to his woman and intuitive of her needs, will see the beginnings of such disobedience, manifesting itself in a variety of minor ways, as a woman naturally pushes out against her man, wanting to feel the solid reassurance of his dominance, of his love, around her.

Here what is required is a Reassurance spanking. A term which covers the spectrum, from those spankings given in masculine desire, the desire to simply have her across his knees. To those that occur in response to feminine desire. The desire, the need, to feel his dominance over her, the physical acting as a doorway by which far deeper emotional levels may be reached.

A WOMAN SHOULD NEVER HAVE TO ASK FOR THIS NEED TO BE MET.

Physical arousal at the pain experienced during Reassurance spankings (which can be of varied intensity, but never approach that which is experienced in a Punishment spanking) is normal and should not be thought of as masochistic deviance. A woman does not get up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom and stub her toe, and as a result start hopping around in pain, while all the while feeling orgasm exploding within her. But the thought of being *taken* across her man's knees, of the feeling of being wholly and utterly *his*. Of associat-

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ing this with the pain that such a Reassurance spanking will bring, will naturally cause many women to feel heated arousal. Purely then it is the association of the pain, the context within which it occurs which causes arousal to be felt. At a base level the act of penis entering vagina is the same whether it occurs during the act of rape, or the act of making love. It is the context within which it occurs and the associations that this brings that makes all the difference. On the issue of feeling arousal at the pain of a Reassurance spanking it is exactly the same.

All that has been written so far, has barely scratched the surface of the multitudinous issues that arise within DD. Particularly this last section. Which gave only the barest outline of a woman's emotional response to the act of being spanked. Of her natural need and desire for it. This was done for the sake of brevity. For this area is one which, to adequately cover with any appreciable depth, would require a body of writing, which, would make what as been written so far, be as merely a solitary grain of sand against the entire Sahara.

Yet it is my hope that some who have read what is written will derive personal benefit from my beliefs, my words. Though I do not hold for a moment that all will.

Though the same song is played, each ear, each heart, perceives a very different tune.⁷²

"CHERISHING THE FAMILY: LITTLE THINGS HAVE BIG EFFECTS" (18 OCTOBER 2003)

I keep a clean and beautiful home. I do it for myself, but I do it for anyone living there, as I want everyone to feel they deserve to live with beauty and order. It doesn't have to be luxurious, but all I can do. And I also do tons of "extras" for my daughter that really are little rituals. Is that a mom thing? I don't think so. I think it is from individual women, and what she feels like giving her child. I do it for Gary as well.

Those little tiny things that mean little but are so noticed. My daughter is always so thrilled when she finds my little treasures, a new little soap, or nail stickers. But I am not the normal mom apparently, and I don't go around saying what I do. So many women say they just don't have time nor inclination to do that sort of stuff. I always nod, but I do it.

My daughter sees some of these teenagers who live on the street, and she doesn't know why they just don't go home to their soft sheets and bubble baths. My daughter is only 6 and I'm not ready to explain the ways of the world to her yet, but I don't ever want her lost to the street. Hence my little rituals are for me as well.

"MY FASCINATING JOURNEY" (18 OCTOBER 2003)

This journey I am about to describe is one that I am still on. It is the journey I have taken after reading *Fascinating Womanhood*, by Helen Andelin. I began my married life at the age of 16. I was pregnant, full of ideals, totally in love, and completely confident I was ready to create the

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family life I had always dreamed of. Little did I know, that it would take years of struggle to find out just how to focus my efforts to achieve what I wanted so badly, a marriage grounded in Celestial Love.

It goes without saying that I was completely ignorant of how to truly meet a man's needs. I had so many things backwards. I was strong when I should have been weak, and weak when I should have been strong. It seemed the only times I could see true love in my husband's eyes was when I threatened to leave him. Only then, could I find that look of intense passion that burned inside him and made him seem almost angry for loving me so deeply.

Since reading *Fascinating Womanhood*, I have learned to grow up and be a woman about the things I needed to, and lighten up and be a girl about things I didn't. I no longer have to waste my energy trying to be what I want to be, what the world says I should be, and what I think my husband wants me to be. Now, I know what I need to be for my husband. FW gave me the key to finding out what went on inside him. It taught me what makes a man feel like a man. This is what they are all searching for deep in their hearts.

I feel this struggle is universal. Maybe we don't all have the same challenges, but we have equal suffering in our journey to find true love. If you think, like I did, that your marriage couldn't have been a crueler joke, than it's time you took a closer look. As women, we have invisible influence that can make or

break a man if we only have the courage to try.

I have been married going on twelve years now, and we have four wonderful children. Our life is rich, strong and incredibly happy. My marriage is now what I always dreamed of. It is real.

I pray that those of you who are searching, but don't even realize you are searching, will read *Fascinating Womanhood*.⁷³

"I'M SO LUCKY TO HAVE FOUND THE RIGHT MAN" (19 OCTOBER 2003)

I am a really difficult individual. I'm very highly strung, argumentative, passionate, clever and willing to use that as a weapon and I'm not exactly a shrinking violet physically either, I'm tall, very fit and strong. I know I scare most men witless. And subconsciously I have been looking for a man who isn't cowered into submission by me for my whole adult life. That has led me to a lot of complete idiots—generally they are so tied up in their own little world that they are simply too disinterested in anybody else to feel intimidated by them. Not a good start and certainly not the type you want to start talking to about getting to the soft and cuddly vulnerable bits inside.

I can't believe how lucky I've been finding Mark. He has his faults but he is so strong and centred and emotionally intelligent that opening up to him comes quite naturally and easily. We've done a fair amount of fighting over the past couple of years, mainly because I kept on pick-

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ing them. I must have given him some hints without realising it that I didn't want to win the battle for supremacy within our household and luckily for me he came to the whole idea of this lifestyle for us. Once we'd commenced on this journey though, I realised it is exactly what I've been looking for.

I've fantasised for years about being spanked, truth be told since childhood. I don't know that I ever wanted that fantasy to be acted out though. Now it has, the reality of a punishment, of being put over my husband's knee and ending up crying, bruised and in pain is a huge distance from those fantasies—they were really I guess about erotic spankings, they certainly did not involve bruises and an inability to wear tight jeans for several days after!

I didn't tell Mark about any of this until after he had first caned me. He said that he didn't feel that what he was going to deliver had anything to do with titillation and that the whole point is the lifestyle we live and the fact that we are both working towards him not having to spank me often or at all.

If you are simply looking for the right partner, I don't think that you'll have the problem of getting into a DD relationship then deciding you don't want it and feeling like you've led the guy astray because if you find the right guy you won't be leading him anywhere—he'll be leading you. You don't need to find a guy who is "into" DD, you need to find a guy who has a natural leadership quality and whose attitude to your

strength is to see that really you are a woman crying out not to have to hold up the whole world all on your own and that you need a safe haven with somebody to take some of the load off for you by taking decisions and taking control. Once you've got there, you can talk to him and ask him to try implementing some of that control by spanking if that is what you want.⁷⁴

"IS HE WHO (OR WHERE) HE SAYS HE IS?" (20 OCTOBER 2003)

[Editor's note: This first section is by The Boss. The second section is by Robin. Both were written some years ago so some things they have said may no longer apply. Nowadays, if meeting someone online you should interact with him or her in a video chat at the first opportunity. It is important that it be video not just audio, because you will get a lot more information if you can see the person. You might also like to ask the person to let you talk to some of his or her friends or family too. That will give you more information.]

What very simple check can you run on your correspondents to identify at least a proportion of those who are not who they say they are?

If you are using the internet to search for a partner, there are some things you need to know. Not everyone apparently searching for a partner on the net is who he or she says he or she is, and some of those

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who say they are looking for a long-term monogamous relationship are saying the same thing to a dozen others too. Of course this applies not just to the internet: plenty of people have several so-called monogamous relationships on the go at any one time. But here, we are concentrating relationships started online.

I want to tell you a cautionary tale about a friend of mine, in the hope that you will not suffer the same distress he did. This friend of mine, whom I'll call Joe, met a woman online in a chatroom for people in his town in England. They chatted and emailed madly for ages, Joe falling passionately in love with her. She had sent him her picture (well, *a* picture—who can say if it was of her? It is easy to grab a picture of someone else off the net...). After Joe had well and truly fallen for her, and was in a terrible state because she kept either refusing to meet him or cancelling dates, he discovered that far from being a 35 year old accountant in England, this person (we still don't know if it was a woman....) was writing from a university server in the USA. It was probably a student.

I mention this story because there were some big red flags he should have seen, and which you should not miss yourself if you are in a similar situation:

First, despite writing vast amounts of email to Joe and chatting a lot, and appearing from what she said to be extremely keen on Joe, this person did not meet Joe, not even in a public place for coffee. If a person is really interested, and he or she has nothing to hide, they *are* going to

want to meet up. There is nothing worse than getting really close to someone online, only to discover that there is zero attraction chemistry when you meet in person. This woman claimed that she had had bad experiences/been abused or something, and that that was why she was reluctant to meet even after a long time, but given the feeling expressed in her email messages and chats, this reluctance simply did not add up.

On several occasions, she agreed to meet, and then did not turn up. Later, she always had a perfect excuse—car accident, grandmother dying, you name it, it sounded plausible. But after about the third such time, I smelt a rat... One thing that everyone in any kind of relationship needs to keep clear in their mind is that *actions speak louder than words* and if a person's actions belie their words, it is the actions you should believe, not the words.

Another friend of mine fell apart over a woman who was extremely friendly to him whenever they met, looking deeply into his eyes and appearing to find him so very interesting.... and yet somehow, she never quite got around to seeing him alone, on a date. There was always some excuse. Her words said she was very interested indeed; her actions said she wasn't. He should have listened to her actions. Instead, she led him a merry dance that went nowhere and cost him a fortune in expensive gifts to her, not to mention a broken heart...

But to get back to Joe, eventually, I got so sick of his angst-ridden phone calls to me about this woman whose

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actions did not seem to me consistent with her words, that I persuaded Joe to run the most basic check on her, just to rule out my hunch that she was not who she said she was.

Joe was at first very angry with me for suggesting that she wasn't genuine. After all, he had her home address, and he had driven past her house and seen her BMW outside, and she really seemed to know about accountancy so she must be an accountant, right? And surely she must be in England, because her email address was a yahoo.co.uk one, right? Wrong! You can get a yahoo.co.uk address whether or not you are in the UK. You can get a yahoo.com address whether or not you are in the USA. And if you have visited a place, you might know that there is often a BMW parked outside the house.

So when you get into a correspondence with a potential partner on the internet, the first thing you should do is to determine where their email is coming from. This is usually very easy, but just knowing the domain name in the From: line is not enough. From line domain names do not necessarily reflect the geographical location from which the email is being sent. (The domain name is something like: "company-namehere.com". The domain name of Taken In Hand is takeninhand.com.)

Here's what to do:

Gather together the email messages you have from the person, and look at the full headers. Do this early in your correspondence! Don't wait

months to find out that they are not who they say they are!

In case you have no idea what I mean by the "full headers"?, here is an example of the headers of a hypothetical message. I have replaced some identifying features with xxx and yyy and changed the numbers etc:

- Received: from xxxx.xxxx.com (xxxx.xxxx.com [xxx.xx.183.6]) by yyy.xxxx.com (x.11.6/x.9.3) with ESMTP id xxxxxxxxxxxx for [email address]; Tue, 1 Oct 2002 10:13:39 -0700 (PDT)
- Received: from mta06-svc.ntlworld.com (62.253.162.46) by xxxx.xxxx.com (MX V5.3 AnHh) with ESMTP for [email address]; Tue, 1 Oct 2002 10:13:40 -0800
- Received: from [10.0.1.1] ([80.3.241.216]) by mta06-svc.ntlworld.com (InterMail vM.4.01.03.xxxxx-229-xxx-127-20010xxx) with ESMTP id Tue, 1 Oct 2002 18:13:31 +0100
- MIME-Version: 1.0
- Message-ID: xxx
- Date: Tue, 1 Oct 2002 18:13:12 +0100

You will normally find at least two lines in a row that start with "Received:?"; if not, you are probably not seeing the full headers. And if they are not all together—if there is a "Date:?" or a "Message-ID:?" or anything else in the middle—then the lower ones are fake; ignore them, and be suspicious.

For each message, look for the lowest "Received:?" line. This is the earliest (even if the times do not agree, since computers often have their clocks set incorrectly), and it

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tells you where the message originated. It won't necessarily look exactly like the one here, but it will normally contain an *IP address*—four numbers with dots in between, like 10.0.1.1 or 80.3.241.216 in the example.

If there is more than one IP address in the line, then one of them will start in one of these three ways: 10.x.y.z, or 192.168.0.z or, less commonly, 172.a.b.c (with *a* being a number between 16 and 31). This is perfectly normal; all it tells you is that there may be more than one computer in the home or workplace sharing an internet connection. Ignore that IP address, and use the other one. In the example, above, you would ignore 10.0.1.1 and use 80.3.241.216.

Now that you have an IP address, the next step is to find the domain name that it belongs to. There are different ways to do this, and some of them depend on the kind of computer system you have. Plenty of web sites will do it for you, but they come and go; try searching the web for “reverse DNS lookup”?

Most current computers also have a way to do it from a command line: on most UNIX or Linux systems, and on Windows NT or XP, type “nslookup 80.3.241.216”?; on Mac OS X and some Linux versions, type “dig -x 80.3.241.216”?, without the quotes, and using the appropriate IP address in place of 80.3.241.216 in the example. You could also try “whois 80.3.241.216”?. If you are uncomfortable typing commands, there are several readily available programs you can download and

install on your computer to do the same thing; current examples include Neotrace, Net Tool Box, and OT Tool. Mac OS X comes with a utility called Network Utility. Simply paste the IP address into the box under “Lookup”?

If you do that for my example, the IP address 80.3.241.216 resolves to the domain name...*

This means that this hypothetical message would have come from customer 216 of NTL.com in Oxford, UK.

When a person is using dialup access, you should expect to see different IP addresses in different messages, but if they are all sent via the same dialup, the IP addresses should resolve to the same ISP or other domain—the tail end of the domain name will be the same. If the domain name does not tell you much, put the last bit of the domain into Google, or simply try to go to it as a URL. For example, if you receive a message from an IP address which resolves to a domain “glorp.burble.pciwest.net”?, and you go to...† you will see that they describe themselves as “Providing service to over 200 cities in Oregon”?

If the person writes from several different places, such as home, work, a friend's house, on holiday in Greece, etc., depending on the type of access he or she has, you would expect to see this reflected in the IP address. You would usually expect

* Domain name: <cp2-oxfd-6-0-cust216.oxfd.cable.ntl.com>

† See: <<http://www.pciwest.net/>>

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to see different IP addresses. This is not foolproof though. I have a broadband account with a facility for web-based access to my ISP, and if I send email using my ISP's web-based front end, the originating IP is the same wherever I am in the world. But in general, and especially if they are on a dialup line, resolving the IP address will tell you where they are. People don't usually make international calls into their ISP, they usually use local access.

If the person is using AOL to access the internet (and don't assume that if there is AOL in the From: line, it is necessarily AOL that is being used for access—From: lines can be changed) you will not be able to find out where he or she is writing from, but each AOL customer is of course known to AOL, as am I to my ISP.

If the person is using one of the major pseudo-anonymous services like Yahoo or Hotmail (which are actually the least anonymous addresses there are!), then look through the message headers for a line like "X-Originating-IP: 80.3.241.216"? and look up that IP address; it tells you where the person was when they connected to the Yahoo or Hotmail web site. Other web-based email services often also provide that information in their headers, but perhaps under a different label from "X-Originating-IP"?.

Had my friend Joe taken this simple step of resolving the originating IP addresses of the messages sent to him by this woman claiming to live in his town in England, he would immediately have noticed that wherever she said she was writing

from, whether Edinburgh, Paris, London or Brussels, all her messages were being sent from a university server in a particular city in the USA.

If you have done this, and there appears on the face of it to be a discrepancy, it might be that there is a perfectly reasonable explanation, so don't immediately accuse your correspondent of playing games, simply ask him or her about it, and suggest that they give you hard evidence that they are where they say they are. No one should be offended that you have run this little check, because we all know that there are many many people on the internet who are not who they say they are. That you might need to do this is another reason to do it early in your correspondence, when it is less likely to be taken personally.

If you suggest that a man give you a phone number and permit you to phone him briefly to verify that he is genuine, and he accuses you of not trusting him and says that one should never give out one's phone number to someone on the internet, the question in your mind should be: who is it who is doing the not trusting, here? Why does he not trust you with his phone number? He is asking you to trust him but he is not trusting you with a phone number or other evidence? This is not a gentleman! For that matter, if a man won't give you his home phone number, he may well be married or paranoid.

Other possible evidence might include where they work. The thing that persuaded Joe to check his friend's IP address was that when he

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phoned her accountancy firm and asked to speak to her, they had never heard of her. Or you can do a Google search and see what comes up. Or you can ask for references. I was once invited to stay with a complete stranger in a different country, after a very short correspondence. He did not mind in the slightest my asking for references, and he put me in touch with his good friends, and even found someone he knew slightly whom I also knew, and his parents phoned me. He never once accused me of not trusting him. On the contrary, he understood completely that it was sensible for me to take this responsibility for my safety.

If a man refuses to give you any evidence that he is where/who he says he is, and accuses you of not trusting him rather than congratulating you on your good sense, walk away. He is already playing mind games. Anyone genuine is not going to object to your taking sensible precautions of this sort, just as you would not object to potential partners doing the same with respect to you. Some women might be more reluctant to give their home phone number very early in the correspondence, but they should still be amenable to providing evidence of some sort. Perhaps they can receive a call at a neighbour's home? Another possibility is that they find a local business, hotel or shop whose management is prepared to permit them to receive a brief phone call from you. This is not at all difficult to arrange. If your correspondent's attitude suggests that it is, you should be seeing the red flags flying.

Weeding out the nutters

When using the internet in your search for a man, weeding through the nutjobs can be a difficult process. I ended up marrying a conservative man with traditional values whom I introduced to the idea of domestic discipline. Worked out well on this count, although he did not warm up to the idea instantly. I did, however, meet him on the internet. He actually emailed me based on my profile (which was not ad-like but did mention I was single), so luck or fate was on my side there. We were living thousands of miles away from one another, but I was already planning on moving to where he was at the point he contacted me (again, luck or fate you pick *smile*) We ended up talking on the phone 5-6 hours a day on average for the 6 weeks before it was moving day for me.

The day I returned to my hometown, he met my stepmom and brother (who although younger than me has a bit of an intimidating appearance given the bulk of his muscle) and went down to the airport with them to meet me. I had seen a picture, but he was MUCH better looking in person and I had already liked the picture he'd sent and was already falling in love with his personality from our conversations. It's amazing how we never ran out of things to talk about. I ended up riding with him to my mom's place (I was staying with her till I could get an apartment) so he ended up meeting most of my family that day. Within a month I was spending most nights at his place... he already

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had a spare bedroom set up for my daughter. Less than 3 months after I met him in person, we married :) and are very happily married a couple years later.

My advice on weeding through the good and bad is to look for compatibilities outside of Taken In Hand. learn about his family, and be on your toes for inconsistencies. If you start to feel a warning flag, trust your instincts and go much slower or back away altogether. Be wary of anyone who wants to control you right now, or attempts to make you feel that you should obey him. If he is the one for you, that will come in time, not during the audition process so to speak. At this moment, you hold the control. Men who are looking for someone with beliefs such as yours will be willing to be patient and help you to feel secure. Women with conservative values are not an easy find these days. I wish you the best of luck.⁷⁵

"WHY MEN START AND WHY THEY STOP" **(22 OCTOBER 2003)**

I have been following a number of discussion groups on the subjects of domestic discipline and general male dominance / female submission for a few years. The first striking observation when a man joins a DD group is the gender distribution. The population of these groups is predominantly female, and many of the women express again and again a frustration that their husbands or boyfriends are not exercising enough dominance, let alone discipline, in the relationship. Other

posters complain that they can get their reluctant men to stand up if they really kick their butts, but that the same men will fall back into their phlegmatic habits at the first given opportunity.

What is wrong with men, they ask? Have they completely lost the dominant, decisive, proactive, self-confident traits that we all consider masculine? The basic message of this article is that we have not. We do have very good reasons to be skeptical of the entire proposition of DD as you present it to us, but this is merely because we speak different languages and misunderstand each other's motives. Male dominance is the natural state of male/female relationships, and denying it brings frustration and misery to us all. So let's take a look into the mind of a reluctant male.

Why do we (husbands) start exercising domestic discipline? We start when you want us to. This is because we really want to make you happy, and we are generic providers. If you come right out and ask us for something, then we provide. If you ask us for a spanking, we provide. It is as simple as that. Men are simple creatures.

Why do we stop? We stop when we suspect that we are not making you happy, or we are not providing what you want. This is also very simple. Then why would we suspect that you do not want a spanking any more? Well, it is very difficult for a man, to whom the idea of being spanked (but not the idea of spanking) is a horrible proposition, to understand your desire for it. So, you ask for a spanking, and when he

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provides, you moan and cry, and he thinks: "See, it is not pleasurable at all. Better not do that again."

Yes, I know you have probably told him that the pain is the whole point of the spanking, and that you can handle it, but he has a lot of baggage that can give him doubts and make him very confused:

1. You do not hit a woman. To any good man, hitting a woman is about as low as you can sink. Believe me, you do not want to be with a man who likes to hit women.

2. You do not pick on somebody weaker than yourself. Most women are significantly physically inferior to most men.

3. Consensual spanking is not violence, but to the untrained observer it looks a lot like it. Most good men loathe the idea of having to resort to brute force to get what they want. It is a defeat. You do not want to be with a man who can only assert himself through physical strength.

4. We have no desire to hurt the ones we love.

5. Who want to think of himself as a wife-beater?

These blockings will stop a lot of men before they even get started. This is especially true if the woman only hints her desire to be spanked. To paraphrase Rowan Atkinson, a man will not take a hint if it paints itself pink and goes dancing on top of his head singing "Happy hints are here again!" If you want a spanking, you really have to shout it out in clear language to the four corners of the world.

Finally, if he overcomes these qualms, he is struck by another doubt: He can see that there is more

to it than the spanking. And he thinks that you know that too but you are refusing to tell him. There clearly is more to it. It would not really be the relationship you were looking for if you had to come out and ask for a spanking every time you thought you needed it and the relationship otherwise were business as usual. If you cannot give him a clear answer to what that "more" is, then there is a big chance that he will not take the significant risks he thinks are involved in the activity. It is very much like not going for a ride in your car if the windshield is frozen over, and you cannot see clearly. You don't do that because the risk for you and others is too high.

Answering the question of what that "more" is, is not an easy task. Just look at the number of posts in DD groups discussing what precisely DD is. This is why I lean towards a more simple explanation: DD is a specific implementation of D/s (dominance and submission), and the latter is simply a relationship where the power to some degree is transferred from one partner to the other. It's not perfect, but it's better than no explanation at all.

My own wife is a hinker. Years ago back in our egalitarian times she once or twice teased me into spanking her lightly, and it very clearly excited her sexually. I was happy to provide, but I had all the reservations listed above. So even though I have always been dominant and wanted no more than to exercise that in my marriage, I refused to pursue it because I thought it was too risky. I would only have to hurt her once and she would consider me to be

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violent. I am really as far from that as you can possibly come. I thought that it would be such a serious breach of the trust we had between us that it could never be fixed again, and our relationship was just too precious to be jeopardized that way. I would never forgive myself, and my own self respect would be permanently damaged.

I tried to talk to her about what it was about the spankings that excited her, but she really did not seem to know, and out of embarrassment she was very reluctant to even discuss it, so I left the subject, and I left the spankings altogether. They were not worth the risk.

Our second attempt was several years later when we first dabbled in D/s. I had brought the subject of my dominant nature up again because the marriage was not harmonious any more, and the sexual images of that excited her. I ended up spanking her again, she got excited again. I said to her that I was sure that there was something in it, but I would not spank her again unless she specifically said to me that she wanted it and why. We ended up agreeing that she could ask for a spanking like she would ask for a backrub. She never asked.

The solution turned out to be me starting to keep a score of spanks she will receive when she teases me and occasionally for disobedience or negligence. She could relate to that, and she started teasing more and more, and she has earned a series of spankings for that ever since. The dynamics are slowly developing into a D/s relationship with rules of conduct.

We are communicating more, but it is still difficult for her, and she has asked me to be patient with her while she comes to terms with the fact that she is by nature submissive. She knows and openly acknowledges that now, but she still has intellectual problems accepting it. We are both very, very happy and have fallen in love all over again. Accepting our true gender-based personalities has lifted such a heavy burden from the relationship. She literally blossoms, and so do I. She continues to tease me when she feels like it, and we both enjoy that part of the dynamics although she to some degree is topping from below. She acknowledges that being obedient and relying on me to make decisions feels like a relief. To me, having the entitlement that I think is natural is an enormous satisfaction. For both of us, being who we are has earned us the respect and the other.⁷⁶

"LETTER TO A POTENTIAL PARTNER" (24 OCTOBER 2003)

(Excerpt)

You describe yourself as dominant, yet few men realize the difference between dominance and control, nor do they understand the true and original meaning of dominance. Most men who consider themselves dominant are in fact controlling.

I have no tolerance for control. I will not be controlled. Yet I have always hungered for dominance from my man.

Control stifles, suppresses, chokes the life out of people. It was Darrell's whole goal to keep me free and safe

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from such energies. He wanted me to be a slave to no one or no thing. Yet once our testing period was over and I agreed to “be his”, his authority over me and my life was complete and unquestioned. He was my friend and lover, my mentor and counselor, my playmate and soulmate. His love wrapped around me like a warm, protective cloak.

I desperately miss his wisdom and insight, his sage counsel, his humor. I miss the strong male energy he exuded. He was both the steering wheel and the rudder of my ship, always making me feel I could accomplish and be anything. He demanded and got my best from me and brought about tremendous changes in my life and in my attitudes. For the first time in my life I was truly glad God created me female, and I experienced happiness, joy and deep satisfaction in being alive.

For the first month after I lost him [to cancer], I couldn't stop crying. I'm sure I will never completely recover, but I know how much he hated to see his baby cry. He demanded that I not let my grief cripple me and swore if I did he would find a way to reach across from the other side and paddle my bottom. From Darrell, such a threat cannot be taken lightly. So I threw myself back into life—Church, Bible study, designing—and I'm reaching out to you as a potential new friend.

So I ask you—is your energy controlling or dominant? Do you enjoy challenge and lively exchange, or do they scare you? Do strong women excite or scare you?

Does the thought of us getting to know one another through letters interest you at all? Do you have the courage it takes to really bare yourself to another? Are you interested in staying mentally and spiritually alive and young and yet continually growing, or does complacency seem more desirable and safer? You say you are “shifting priorities”. Are you willing to share what that means to you? Can you handle change and challenge and see them as something fun, or do they represent something you feel you need to stamp out and destroy?

I would really like to know what you mean by “dominant psychologically”. Recently, I had a man tell me how strongly dominant he is. When pressed, his dominance turned out to be an enjoyment of playing the dominant partner in B&D games and had nothing whatsoever to do with general relationship dynamics. Can you explain more fully what you mean by exploring the parameters of female psychology?

You present yourself as intelligent and educated, and one could assume you are predominantly left brain oriented. My son is 23—and has been designated as a math and computer genius. The average IQ of my family is 130—mine is 140, but I'm predominantly right brain oriented. Are you, as my son is, exploring the mysteries of psychology and emotion because they seem foreign to your intellect and logic and therefore entice you?

You express the desire for a mate who will be “happily obedient” to you—yet – this doesn't adequately

express or explain your attitude toward "her". What do you see as your role as "husband"—and what is it that motivates you? It is the attitudes of our hearts that truly define us as human beings.

Scripture teaches that man is to be the head of woman as Christ is the head of his church. What does that mean to you?

Darrell and I had a true spiritual partnership. We were committed to one another's inner growth and spiritual development. In seven years, we experienced and grew more together than most couples do in a lifetime—because it was our goal to grow and overcome together.

I wanted, needed and demanded a husband who could be my hero, a man able to make decisions and take responsibility for those decisions. Submission is an act of the will; it is choice (as opposed to subservience). I am unable to submit to a man who cannot lead at least as well as I can myself.

Darrell needed to be adored, admired, respected. He had a driving need to be a woman's hero, her knight in shining armor. And he needed to be served, to be master of his kingdom. Yet he never made me feel like a servant. He made me feel appreciated and cherished. It was sheer joy to please him and support his needs.

You have aroused my curiosity, Larry, and curiosity is a wonderful antidote to depression. I would really like to know about your experiences and how they have helped to form your attitudes. What kind of life is it that has led you to place such an unusual ad?⁷⁷

"IN PRAISE OF FASCINATING WOMANHOOD" (25 OCTOBER 2003)

Since reading Helen Andelin's book, *Fascinating Womanhood*, I feel like I was going through life blindfold, and now, suddenly, I can see. Suddenly, I get it. Suddenly, men don't seem so incomprehensible anymore. Now, it seems obvious to me why things I was doing weren't working, and most important, what does work! I could dance for joy! I used to secretly wish I'd been born a man, but now I absolutely love being a woman.

Helen Andelin explains how to be what she calls The Ideal Woman From A Man's Point Of View. My understanding of this is that this is a woman who understands men, has inner and radiant happiness, is of good character and a domestic goddess, is radiantly healthy, feminine, and can be childlike to diffuse tension in difficult moments. Andelin divides these traits up in to two sides, which she calls the Angelic (the traits that make you a bit untouchable and put you up on a pedestal) and the Human (the warm, very endearing, attractive traits).

When I started reading the book, I thought I could do away with the domestic goddess aspect, because I'm not the world's best housekeeper, but I must admit, the book has profoundly affected how I see domestic drudgery. Now, I take pride in keeping a beautiful house, and sing and dance as I work. I love the look on my husband's face when he

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sees me enjoying making his home a haven for him.

That's one of the things this book taught me: to look at life and problems with a positive attitude. Try it! It really works! I've found that simply seeing my husband in a different light has made a whole lot of difference in our relationship. When I started reading this book, it was to fix our marriage (and that means my husband). It turned out that what needed fixing was me and my negative attitude. I can now see how that was spoiling everything.

FW helped me understand my husband and treat him better, and boy did he ever respond! He used to have sad eyes that looked past me not at me. Now he has eyes that sparkle with happiness, and he looks at me so long sometimes I blush even at my age. That's another thing FW has given me. I was hard and cynical; now, my husband says I am "delightfully feminine and cute". He loves my new feminine appearance (if you'd met me before FW you wouldn't believe I'd ever dress feminine!) and youthful shy feminine blushes. When he sees that softness in me, sometimes I think he's so moved with love he's going to cry. We're in love again like at the beginning, only better.

Part of what makes him call me cute is my childlikeness. Again, before I read the book, I thought I wouldn't like the part about being childlike, but that's because I imagined a grown woman being like a child all the time. That's not what the author advises. My understanding of the book is that you can use childlikeness to express an-

ger/dissatisfaction in a way which is unthreatening and endearing and funny and breaks the tension instead of adding to it. What could be better than getting your point across in a non-confrontational, endearing way which makes your man laugh and want to kiss you, instead of having a big scene or painful silence?

Better still, in explaining how to express anger in a childlike way, Mrs Andelin advises us to say things that compliment the man rather than insulting him. When you stamp your foot and pout, you use words that emphasize his manhood, his strength, his physical superiority, e.g., he's "a great big meanie" or "a big strong man" and you're little, defenceless, weak. This takes the threat out of your words and makes it possible for him to hear your criticism without reacting defensively.

I got a lot out of the section on understanding men. It helped me see what I was doing wrong—everything, basically! LOL! Once I started admiring and accepting my husband, he started changing. I'm still not sure whether he changed or whether it is just my perception that changed, but who cares? He seems just marvelous now. I don't even really see flaws in him anymore. I used to think we are supposed to be a team and he's not holding up his end of things, but this book changed my attitude. We are a team, yes, but that doesn't mean he has to do what I think he should do. He's the man, and he gets to decide what he does. He needs the freedom to act as he sees fit, and I need to respect that. I realized that what needed changing

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was (yes, you've guessed it) my attitude.

I would ask him to take out the trash, and when he didn't, I'd get angry or feel resentful and irritated. Taking out the trash is the man's job, right? Wrong! I realized that what I was doing was having a whole bunch of expectations for him that weren't respectful of his individuality and his right as a man to make his own decisions. I would harp on and on at him to take out the trash, and I'd feel angry that he was making me nag at him. LOL! When I read FW (and *The Surrendered Wife*) I saw that I was behaving like his mother (how sexy is *that*?!).

Does it matter who takes out the trash? It only takes a moment! When I calculated the amount of time I'd spent stewing about my husband not pulling his weight, instead of taking responsibility for my own happiness, I felt real stupid. It would have taken so much less time for me to take out the trash than sit there stewing and feeling sorry for myself, and once I thought about it more, after reading the books, I started finding it sexy that my husband decides what he does and when. LOL!

I hope this gives you a taste of why I like the book.⁷⁸

"HOW TO BREAK IT TO A NEW MAN" (26 OCTOBER 2003)

As some of you guys might remember from my earlier article* on *Taken In Hand*, I've tried dating New

Men and I get bored and don't feel the level of excitement I'm looking for. I'm single and dating, and like other women I've corresponded with, I find men these days want strict equality or for the woman to be in charge. In the last month, I've met a load of guys and let's just say it's not been plain sailing. If I tell you I've been considering almost for real trying to reprogram myself into a dominant woman, you'll get the picture. Everywhere I go, men want a dominant woman. Gee, it must be great for gals who are naturally inclined in that direction!

I was asked for an update and to pass on the advice I've been given in the last month, so let's get to that now. I asked how to tell a guy what I want and was told to identify what it is I want for myself clearly. That's good advice. If you can't articulate what you want, how will the poor guy be able to give you what you want? So my first piece of advice to fellow travelers is:

1) Try and write down what you want. You could then use that as a basis for a letter to any new guy you're dating and want to tell.

2) Ask yourself: is he is worthy of you? When you're looking for a man who'll be the head of the household, it's all too easy to forget that he's got to be a good person otherwise.

3) Ask him about his previous relationships, what the problems were, and how he handled them... (and as Wolfgirl said to me, maybe then you can talk about how you were handled! LOL!)

4) If you can't tell him directly, you could try talking about sexual fantasies with him, or write him a fantasy

* "Where are all the strong men?" 29 September 2003.

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if it's difficult to talk, and see how he responds. With one guy I wrote a fantasy with a cliffhanger ending and he replied and finished the story. If you do this a few times you can get a sense of his interest level LOL! and if it's worth pursuing.

5) Watch and discuss old movies. I've not kept a note of who said this but what great advice! Old movies depict a more old-fashioned relationship between the man and the woman, usually with the man as the head of the household. So maybe you could rent a few, watch them with him, and then begin a discussion about how that's the kind of old-fashioned relationship you're looking for. His response is bound to tell you something about whether he's open to being dominant in the relationship. If he looks at you like you're off your head, at least you'll know!

6) Just be honest and tell him. If he is interested you will know without having spent a lot of wasted time. This is something you obviously want so don't spend a lot of time on someone who is not interested. They won't warm up they don't need time they either are interested or they are not. Simple.

7) Tell him to read Taken In Hand and some of the other sites you enjoy.

8) If you're looking for a disciplinarian, here are some approaches that might work and have done for others:

Next time you do something that annoys your man, do this, as soon as possible while he is still angry:

Have a brush ready (one correspondent recommends Rubermaid

roughneck brushes, available in the cleaning departments of most hardware stores. The long handled ones are very effective, but probably too rough for beginning) and say to him: "I am sorry. You have every right to be angry. If you want to spank me for it, I'll understand and accept it. I am serious about that." That will open up the conversation. If he agrees, sometime, ask him if he wants a brush.

If he himself behaves badly or does something annoying, say: "If I did something like that, you would have every reason to spank me; and I would let you, too."

Similarly, if a woman you know does something bad, or if you see someone being disrespectful to her man in a public place, or if you read about something of that sort, or if you see something like that on TV (not difficult!), say: "She should be spanked. Seriously, he should take a brush and spank her till she cries."

He probably won't take you very seriously the first time, for the reasons Eggheadgave in his article, "Why men start and why they stop," but it will put the idea into his head. If you repeat this a few times, he will get the message and you will get what you want. The one drawback is that if you don't truly believe it's about deserving a spanking, you can't say that without misleading him as to your reasons for wanting it.

But if you like this approach, you do not have to behave badly. All you have to do is notice bad behavior and comment on it. Public places are full of it. At lunch you will see someone being rude or disrespectful

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etc; just say that if you ever talk to him like that, you wouldn't expect him to sit there meekly like the guy over there is, you'd expect him to deal decisively with you, taking you in hand/spanking you.

As one guy said: don't think you are so perfect that he doesn't have a reason to discipline you. He does, and you'll find out what it is. A spanking is a great mind opener.

Finally, Egghead advised:

I think it may become more difficult to tell him the better you get to know him and the more invested in each other you get, so my advice would be to bring it up before too long.

Perhaps you could start out by telling him that you are an old-fashioned girl, and that you prefer traditional gender roles. He will ask what you mean, and you can tell him that you think the man should be the head of the relationship. If he inquires further, you can proceed to tell him that you have been in that sort of relationship before. Try to get him interested enough to pry a little into that. The key is to make him so nosy that he will be asking the questions rather than you pushing the info on him. It will take much of your embarrassment away.

Be prepared to have to tell him several times. When I was very young (before the Internet) I had a friend who told me just that, and I thought she was not serious about it and was trying to make fun of me. She left me when I did not take the bait.

It's easier said than done, I know, but good luck in any case.

Thanks, Egghead and everybody else who answered.

UPDATE: Some further advice just in, this time from Bob:

"It seems to me that in order for a relationship with domestic discipline to work, it must develop within a strong, long term, friendship based relationship. If you let a fella you're interested in know early on that you'd like an occasional spanking, and he goes along with it, I'd say you're in good shape. To be the giver of domestic discipline takes a very confident person. They must also be confident in their trust of you. Imagine what you could do to some fellow if he disciplined you and you got mad and went to the cops. His life would be over.

"This level of trust takes time. My better half didn't give me a real disciplinary beating until we were married for several years. I get two or three a month now. In fact, got one tonight. Anyway, he will need to understand you *very well* in order to take on the responsibility.

"Don't worry though. There are few things cuter than a bouncing female behind, and you, over time will learn how to make him happy. Do this a lot, especially after a bun warming. A decent man wants to make his mate happy. If you're happy, he'll be happy. If a DD/head of the household marriage will make you happy, he'll come round.

"The prerequisite is a decent, sane, confident man—just like your mother would want you to find."⁷⁹

"OBEDIENCE AND AUTONOMY" (27 OCTOBER 2003)

I do not "obey" Frank in the biblical sense. This "obedience" is an

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important aspect of domestic discipline, D/s, BDSM and I cannot describe its workings in all of these various frameworks. What I will describe is what works for me and how I see it within my relationship with Frank. I think it would be very interesting to see how others see this and how it works for them in their relationships.

Let me begin by saying that yes I do obey Frank, but that obedience comes from a different source than having been directed (by this I mean discussed and decided that this is a necessary part of our relationship, and I must do as he says because he has the authority to make decisions in my (our) self interest) by him to do so, or even a mutual decision by both of us to allow him this authority. The reason I say this is because long term, day to day I know myself well enough to know I would not do well within that sort of structure, and truthfully neither would Frank. For me it would be the source of constant conflict and would eventually fail, and I would rebel against it. It would rob me of my ability to effect choices within the relationship and feel as if I were an active participant. I have no doubt that many women who do choose to "obey" their husbands feel very involved in making choices within their relationship, this one (of obedience) being one of them.

This does not sound very submissive, but I do submit and I do obey. The source of that submission and obedience is not because Frank is head of the household and we have chosen to allow him that position to make decisions for us. Its

source is intrinsic. Its source is my decision to meet my obligations to our relationship. Is this any different from a woman deciding to let her husband be the final say and she choosing to obey those decisions? Maybe it isn't, but its message is for me.

I think it keeps the door to fluidity open wide and allows us both to respond to our obligations to the relationship as a separate entity. There is Frank, there is me, and there is our shared relationship. My obligation to it is what directs my decisions. I do obey him when it enhances our relationship and keeps it safe and working. If I choose to not consider our relationship and cause a disruption, he has my consent to act in the best interest of "us" by using discipline to reconnect me to it. My choice that caused the disruption was not disobedience. It could have been for many reasons that seemed very valid to me. If its effect is to cause disruption, discipline will correct that by making me very aware of how he was left feeling.

I just feel more autonomous within this framework. Remember I am only talking about myself. I do believe many women will feel comfortable within a structure based on head of the household and obedience and that they will be entirely successful. I am in no way saying hey, you have to obey your husband, you must not have any autonomy within your relationship. I have no right to suppose that and I do not.

Now, does Frank decide when discipline is needed and do I submit to

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it? Yes! He does and yes I do. I submit to this because I have an obligation to do so. I do so because I have needs that I want met. I do so because I want a relationship with him. He must have these obligations also. Not just me. So does he obey me? Well, I think in *all* relationships we obey each other. We all provide and accept discipline in some form, for us it is a bare bottomed talking to, because that is the pathway we both take, in fact find necessary to get to where we want to go. For me there is no other path that is as powerful and as completing.

This may bring up questions about who has the final say, and from what I have read here it is of real concern to many. I don't know why, but for Frank and myself, it seems a moot point. We seem to be able to work it out. It somehow naturally flows to the most capable to make the decision, and we do use compromise. When we are together long term it may be more of an issue, I cannot say for certain now, but so far, and we have made some important decisions together, it works out. I know of regular couples like this also, so I am supposing we have been given a gift of agreement or have personality types that work together more easily.

That said, I would like to comment on something Stephen once said.

He asked, "Does the obedience exhibited ... during a disciplinary session play out elsewhere in the relationship? Is obedience an important factor in our ... relationships?"

I would say YES and YES. I think it permeates the entire relationship in our sense of responsibility to it, the

fact that it represents a form of responsibility it seems to assign it importance as a factor necessary for success.

I once needed to see a doctor. Frank told me to make the appointment. I did not. He spanked me, I made the appointment. I very much enjoy this kind of attention from him. In a case such as this, I felt his concern for me and his taking action to ensure I did follow through was not a bad feeling at all. But, if he told me I had to have supper ready each evening at 6 PM without fail, well that would be another story indeed. We do eat at 6 each evening as a general ritual, but he has never directed me to do so, or there would be consequences. That, I would have a hard time with. Am I making sense here? I love the way Blush and her husband respect each other's needs and wishes.....and the way Frank describes it as basically their respective roles anyway and they fit that into an expectation for each other.

Frank likes the idea of being a HOR very much; even head of the household is not offensive to either of us, but I get to take on that role of concerned wife too, well, wife to be, and I do. We do not lose any of the impact of the male/female dynamic when we do this. It just has an ability to move around according to the situation or need.

Stephen also said, "I know this may seem hopelessly romantic, but we find the male-female dynamic endlessly enriching. Do other men and women feel this way?"

Yes, we do, I do. And I love it.⁸⁰

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"WHAT HAPPENS WHEN HE MAKES A MISTAKE?" (28 OCTOBER 2003)

In my house, where Gary is head of the household (head of the household), he wants and expects me to tell him when he has disappointed me, or when I feel he has made an error in judgement. I am not that great on criticism, and I always come from this apologetic place. But Gary sees right through this, and understands what I am trying to say. He encourages me to be angry with him, and let him know when he has messed up. But he also understands my background, and I've never had a safe place anywhere in my life where I could be angry or show my disappointment.

The other night, he spanked me. It was a great spanking and he used the crop. It hurt, but it was very intimate and very connecting. One of our little rituals is when a spanking is over, Gary makes me stand and watch him put the implements away in their place. This time he has me hold the crop. He goes and stands inside my closet and asks me to "give it to him". He knew I wanted to throw it at him. That cropping hurt! So I did! He was so happy. He also said it was feeble and the crop landed at his feet instead of making its mark on him.

But I am also comfortable telling Gary when I feel he isn't seeing the obvious, or is too heavy handed in the way he deals with something, or is hurting my feelings. He is always open to my thoughts and insights. He retracts immediately and will do

what is necessary to make things right.

We do not use two way spanking, but we communicate freely. Being submissive is not a dehumanizing act. It's not about accepting everything he gives. It's still about two people who love deeply and want the end result to have wonderful and positive feelings from our expressions to each other.⁸¹

"MY PERFECT GUY, AND THE MARRIAGE HE HAS GIVEN ME" (29 OCTOBER 2003)

I've been married now for two months. If you've read my writing elsewhere, you'll know the circumstances of how that coincided with launching into a more traditional style of life together. My relationships with men have always involved a lot of conflict. I'm very assertive and I guess that can be interpreted as aggressive too. I work in a man's world, I'm one of a very small number of women in my field and I'm just one of life's scrappers I suppose. But that is a mantle I assume for my day job. I don't want the hassle of it when I get home too. I like the idea of having my man kill my personal dinosaurs and I like the idea of cooking them down for him once he has!

So when I got married second time around, I vowed to obey. I didn't really address it in my mind as an active lifestyle choice but on reflection, when we looked at the services we could choose, I had no hesitation in choosing the very traditional one. We had the kind of priest who was happy to remove the obey bit if we

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wanted, but I recall Mark shooting a look at me when this was suggested (by the priest) and knowing in my heart that I wanted it in my vows and in my life.

Part of why I can obey Mark, is that he just so clearly is the head of our household. He's a naturally in charge sort of guy. But more than that, I respect him. For the first time in any relationship I've had, and not just the romantic ones, I've met somebody who is stronger than me from an emotional intelligence point of view. I know that I can rely on him and that he wants me to. He can rely on me too, let's face it we all need a hug every now and then, but what I'm talking about is more to do with taking on the traditional roles in our household and having one of us be the decision maker.

For those who suggest that the discipline should go two ways – and by that I mean that the husband should submit to discipline from the wife as well as the other way around, I say this, I don't get to punish my husband, that's the whole point... I promised to obey him. In return he protects me, supports me and takes the responsibility of being the decision maker. I guess his punishment is in the consequences when he makes the wrong decisions. He imposes his own discipline – self-discipline.

I certainly don't get to or want to tell him to take a "bare butt whipping". The lifestyle we have chosen together isn't about an excuse to indulge in S&M or pointless physical punishments, it's about traditional roles within our household which create an atmosphere of har-

mony because we don't have the "modern" battle of trying to lead the pack; and part of that includes chastisement from the leader occasionally, in many forms.

In the last week or so, we have introduced a new way of reducing antagonistic scenes and arguments brewing. It involves counting! On some occasions Mark will simply tell me to count to ten. I remember my granny used to tell me to do this when steam started to shoot from my ears as a kid. When Mark tells me to do it, it makes me stop and think about the track I'm going down. If he's had to say it to me it tends to be because the track is pretty self-destructive, either for me or our relationship. On other occasions, he will ask me if I want him to count me. Either I stop or he counts to one – that will have a consequence later involving some form of punishment, if he gets to two, well the consequences simply increase and at three the consequence will probably involve a later physical chastisement and will involve me having to take time out there and then. It seems like the most embarrassing thing in the world to be told to take a time out in a public place like a shopping centre for example. But sitting on a bench for ten minutes, calming myself down and thinking through what ever it is I've been up to *works!* The whole point is that I stop, I calm down, I know that I have just been told that the battle no longer exists and that is the end of it, no grudges, back to harmony and getting on with the fun of loving each other and the time we have. OK so it isn't the end of it in that the consequen-

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tial punishment may come later but it is the end of it on an emotional level.

I know that I can easily goad Mark to the point where he wants to punch my lights out. He doesn't of course but when I use that kind of emotional bullying against him, we have both agreed that he has the absolute right to let me know the error of my ways. I'm not a whipping slave, I make sure that it doesn't happen often and that it will happen less and less often but only because I'm learning to behave myself in more appropriate ways and therefore he doesn't need to show me any form of discipline. Having spent the past 30+ years learning how to be a "modern" woman, it naturally takes a little time unlearning those dictates, accepting that actually I don't want them.

Since entering into my new, married lifestyle, I have very rapidly come to the conclusion that the obedience I observe in my marriage is about much more than my husband putting me over his knee. In fact, that is probably the least significant part of it. What is truly important and remarkable is the joy we have found in our traditional roles. All the pressures of our pre-marriage days have simply drifted away by defining our relationship in this way. By defining it, I don't mean we've called it a "DD" relationship, because Mark certainly hasn't and we have no interest in any sort of "scene". What I mean is that we have defined the roles we both have and we both know what the boundaries of those respective roles are and we have rules to follow.

This takes a lot of the negative thinking out of the whole equation. I know that if there is an important decision to be made, Mark has the final word after listening to my opinion, there is no point in fighting if I don't agree, I have already pre-agreed that he gets to decide and of course, he also gets to live with himself if he's FUBAR'd.

So sorry any feminists out there reading this because... I want men to hold doors open for me, I want to feel like a princess in my husband's arms, I want to be feminine, I want to be able to cry when it all gets too much for me out there and to know that my husband is there, shining armor buffed by me, sword in hand ready to fight my battles for me. It makes me feel safe and it makes me the happiest I've been in my whole life.⁸²

"THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF INSTALLING A SPINE IN A PANSY" (29 OCTOBER 2003)

After the flak we've been getting lately, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that The Yeti described Taken In Hand as: "A very cool site about married people." Must be being sarcastic, I thought. (Well gosh, we seem to be regarded as in need of psychiatric help by even the nicest, most open-minded folks.) But to my amazement, I don't think he *was* being sarcastic. Take a look at what The Yeti says:

As women are constantly reminded to avoid conflict, it is only natural that they are impressed/attracted/drawn to men who seemingly break all the rules and do what they

could never do. The men also seem to pay less of a price for their refusal to bend to authority.

Eventually, the woman reaches the point where she needs the bad boy to start doing things. [...]

Women are attracted to assholes for two reasons. One—Women want a MAN. Someone who makes decisions, follows their own course, isn't afraid to speak his mind, has a purpose in life, protects his family and friends and country, and treats other people with respect when they deserve it. They can not stand a pansy. When confronted with the choice of an asshole or a pansy, they will always go to the asshole because at least they have a shot at tempering his rough edges. It is impossible to install a spine in a pansy.

[...] The asshole is at least proving they have some spine. Sadly, the asshole only stands up to the woman pre-relationship. Thus, the woman is either frustrated that she can't get the man into a relationship, and then disgusted with his complete surrender if she can.

Evidently there is wisdom out there in the blogosphere beyond Taken In Hand! In a comment, The Yeti added:

My point was women want real men. These are in short supply, though there are plenty out there.

Enquiring minds on this site would like to know where they're all hiding, Yeti.

UPDATE: Immediately after finding and mentioning The Yeti's kind words about Taken In Hand, I discovered not one but two pieces singing our praises, on Spanking Blog. Don't miss them!⁸³

"HOW SLEEPING BEAUTY FOUND HER PRINCE" (1 NOVEMBER 2003)

I have been wired to respond to strong, tender, spanking men ever since I can remember. My earliest sexual fantasies—around age 4 or 5—were about being lovingly disciplined and spanked. I had one or two chance exposures to such men in my 20s which scared me to death—my response was so overwhelming—so I ran from it most of my adult life.

After a disastrous first marriage to a "mama's boy" I found out there were other people like me when I got my first computer. I then went about finding a partner with the same determination and persistence that I did everything else important in my life. I wrote personal ads and posted them everywhere appropriate on the Internet, and I made my ad as honest and open as I could, both about who I was, and about what I was seeking. I spent time in many, many chatrooms where I might meet a partner, and I created profiles for yahoo, aol and ICQ letting people know who I was and what I wanted. I figured the internet was my best bet, because as a divorced mother of some 40 odd years, and a physician who worked exclusively with women, I wasn't likely to meet my dream man on my ward nor in my suburban family neighborhood. So the Internet it was....:)

I corresponded with more men than I care to remember. I met a number of them, 99% of them not more than once, in a public place. I had been doing this determined

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search for about 3 years when I met my fiancé. He “picked me up” in an AOL chatroom. We IM’d for several weeks, then spoke on the phone for several more weeks, then met in public. I won’t lie to you, I went home with him that first time. Basically we both knew right away, and I was lucky that Robert was the man he represented himself to be. The end of the story is we are getting married next Saturday and moving into a new home together right after the wedding.

Here are some things I learned along the way:

1. You must believe in yourself and believe there is someone out there for you.

2. You must wake up every morning thinking “today could be the day,” and one day, it will be.

3. You have to take as good care of yourself as you can, and live your life as fully as you can as a single woman. Nurture your friendships, your hobbies, yourself. You will have more to offer your mate.

4. Be careful. Take your time. Get to know someone before you drape yourself over anyone’s knees. (Ok, but remember I’d spent about 3 months in daily conversation with Robert before I met him. Ok, then do as I say, not as I did....)

5. Make sure you enjoy your man for who he is besides your disciplinarian.

Real life is not a series of spankings, and spankings don’t take all that much time. You have many, many hours to relate to your partner in other ways. Make sure you can love him all the time he isn’t spanking you! Robert and I

love to haunt junk shops, flea markets, antique shows, take car trips, watch movies on video at home, and play mini golf. We share a religion, values, cultural outlooks. And, most important of all, he’s a terrific stepfather type person for my two sons.

I’d be happy to answer any questions or help any single woman in her process. It got really hard, really lonely at times. There were times I thought my longing would consume me. But I just never gave up. And now, like *Sleeping Beauty*, I am about to go off to marry my middle aged Prince, who keeps threatening me that he will have our officiant say, “And now you may spank your bride!” That darned man....)⁸⁴

“BLANKET CONSENT” (4 NOVEMBER 2003)

The spanking scenes in romance books have always fascinated me. They were the images of a strong heroic figure who fell in love with the girl of his choice and then spanked her when she was being a pain. It coincided with my feelings of having a strong male figure to up-end me when I was being the same kind of pain in the butt. Erotic spanking, until that time, had not occurred to me.

When I discovered the spanking world on the Internet, I spent hours reading everything I could find. I then started introducing my husband to the fun, erotic, playful spanking and we found we loved it and it revitalized our intimate relationship in a wonderful way.

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After four or five months, and a lot of reading, I approached the subject of discipline spanking with him. He admitted he had never thought of spanking his wife, even though he had spanked me at one point in time when we were first married. He is a pretty alpha personality; always swatting and playing dominant male and I figured he would take to it very well. He didn't.

Coupled with his reluctance, and the fact that we both came from a heavy Christian background, we had a lot of concepts to get past. I read him articles on implements, how to position, showed him the forum, the whole nine yards. We worked at it, tried setting up rules, tried keeping mistake logs, tried maintenance spanking, etc.

It seemed to be too much trouble to keep up with all the ins and outs that seemed to be expected of him. Especially when he was feeling down himself. So we were kind of off and on, with me being disappointed at his inconsistency all the time, and I felt he was just playing a game that he would get tired of. Or that he really felt it was all a kink that he hoped I would grow out of if he humored me for a while. I wrestled with all the *I don't want him to think I'm perverted* questions in trying to make this work, so in the beginning we didn't communicate as well as we could have.

At the same time, I was trying to understand my needs, why I was so fascinated with it, why I wanted it so much. And how to convey that to him, when I didn't know myself. I kept having the image of the fantasy figure that would "just do it" in

spite of my protests and engaged in many discussions of these sorts on the forums. Discussing whether or not I was submissive enough, whether I really wanted him to be the head of the household, what to do if he changed his mind and decided *he* wanted it and then I didn't, etc.

After 18 months, we have finally boiled all the concerns, discussions, feelings, misunderstandings, etc., down to one thing: blanket consent.

He now has blanket consent from me to spank as he sees fit, if and when he thinks its necessary, regardless of whether there is a rule in place or not. This is *my* choice—a concept that he has long struggled with—the taking away of my choice, forcing me to do something I might not want to do by enforcing a rule he might think was important.

I know now what his expectations are, and he has progressed to the point where I don't really look forward to getting over his lap very much for a reminder. Actual discipline spankings are not that prevalent, but I get quite a few reminders or pulled-up-short-for-something style punishments that are usually short, but painful—LOL! Meant to be warnings not to go there again or to push this limit or I run the risk of a real butt burner.

I may get to bed late for three nights, and then suddenly I am in trouble. It's his choice now. I don't have any expectations any more. He is not bound by a set of rules *per se*. I know what he wants from me and I run the risk of being in trouble if I choose to ignore those expectations.

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He has been very conventional, in spite what I had thought in the beginning. But the thing that keeps drawing him back into it when we have hiccups, is the emotional closeness that we lose when we stop, or fade off. I have given him the opportunity to opt out of it many times, as recently as a few months ago. But each time we do, the emotional closeness we enjoy goes away. I have struggled with the concept that it's just not who he is for a long time now and felt I didn't want to force him to do anything he wasn't comfortable with.

There have been many discussions on whether a man uninterested in control is truly a that, or if they are just men waiting for their true dominant nature to come out. Some men are just naturally dominant; they are that way all the time, and it's just who they are. Other men seem to be able to become dominant with lots of encouragement and help from their woman, but it's not really who they are inside, or so it seems. We have talked about this and I told him I didn't want him to pretend to be something he didn't feel.

After much discussion, one thing has become certain. He loves the way I am when he is spanking me whether for fun or for discipline. The act of disciplining me is not the erotic part for him when he punishes. It's the submissiveness I feel for him afterwards that really makes him bond with me emotionally. And for me too. When he fills my needs by living this way, my desire to please him increases intensely. I feel it inside; it's not a pretense. He draws out my submissive nature

when I am over his knee and then being cuddled and comforted afterwards. I truly feel a stronger desire to please him in every way and he loves that. He does not want to lose that. That is what makes him keep trying again, even though he doesn't enjoy hurting me, and would really rather not do discipline at all. But he has realized that he can't have it both ways. It's just not there when we are not living it, not in the degree that it is when we are.

So that is where we are with the blanket consent concept. I hope this may be of some help to anyone reading it and that they will realize that it's only my experiences, not facts. Some may not relate at all, others may feel similarities.

The bottom line is, this works for us because we have worked diligently at it and kept coming back to try again and to talk and communicate until we can work out our feelings about it. We then try to implement it in the best way for both of us to benefit from it. No two couples will be exactly alike. And there's no magic formula that you can follow and have guaranteed success. You just have to talk, listen, and talk some more until you understand each other, and then work hard to please each other.⁸⁵

"THROW OUT THE RULES!" (5 NOVEMBER 2003)

Brandy's article, "Blanket consent," got me thinking about the whole rulemaking process. The idea of a list of rules is lost on me. I know for some it is the essential part of

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discipline, i.e., without the rule and the breaking of that rule discipline is unnecessary or nonexistent. I have heard examples of some couples' lists and they are extensive. Some read like a laundry list of nitpicking and those lists are evidentiary proof, in my humble opinion, of an ego-maniacal man run amok over his doormat wife. A much better approach, in my opinion, is blanket consent. The same result (a clean happy home) can be reached without all the micromanaging.

Our life together is way too busy for me to sit down with my fiancé and make out a list of house rules and keep track of misdeeds, etc. (Incidentally, that is what people do when they fight generally and we know what a time waster that is.) I have happily given up the role of control freak and my fiancé has no desire to take it up where I left off. He's too laid back for a bunch of rules. (Easygoing and dominant—is that weird?) Anyway, we know what we want out of the relationship, we know what level of intimacy and family harmony we are seeking to maintain, we know what we can do to ensure that the other feels like a happy fulfilled partner in the relationship, so why mess it up with rules?

Even though I say I know what makes my fiancé happy, it's not that he wrote it down and posted it on the fridge and then put a smiley face next to it everyday I did that certain thing. For me it is the same with rules. I know what tips the balance away from happiness and/or peace in the house (which is our ultimate goal). In my opinion it almost

cheapens the goal to have to make that tick mark next to each item each and every day. I think I take a more global approach to domestic discipline, at least as it works in my home, and I cannot think of it as narrowly as twenty items on a page. Maybe for some people the goal is the "perfect wife" who never overspends the grocery budget or who always mops the floor three times a week and does each of those twenty items on her list of rules consistently, or even refrains from doing them whatever the case may be. Thankfully, that is not us.

If I was spanked for not being on task with the housework or being late picking up dry cleaning or any of the more mundane tasks I would resent each of those rules. It would be much like the difference between "I want to" and "I have to". I wouldn't be nearly as happy to do those things if they were rules and not blessings. Now I will tell you that I revel in the joy that is a clean house. I bless my fiancé with good homecooked hot dinners, clean fresh towels in the bathroom, and other touches that will make him know I am happy he lives here, too. I know my fiancé appreciates that I take the time to make our home a beautiful and comfortable haven for both of us. He is the one who noticed that I never fail to sing while doing dishes (yes the wonder that is new aromatherapy dish soap). Would I be so blissfully domestic if I dutifully ticked off each item only to avoid a spanking? Nope, not a chance. I think people run the risk of becoming too enmeshed in the details (the rules) that they lose sight of the goal.

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But just say there are no written rules, and also say for the sake of argument, that I do let the house get unkempt and dirty and there's not a clean matched set of socks to be found anywhere within it. Our haven has now become a hovel. What is the likely result? Discord, unhappiness, unrest and a general yucky feeling like a black cloud hangs over our once tranquil abode. And what is the ultimate result of that? Yep, you guessed it—spanks for me because I tipped the balance from peaceful and happy to chaotic and unhappy—and most unnecessarily I might add. Maybe, some of you men out there whose women are struggling in the homemaking department might try throwing out the house rules for a while and see if she responds better to the idea of bestowing blessings over following rules. And like I said, you can come to the same result without the all the micromanaging or resentment.

That being said, I have two final thoughts: 1. In my opinion, a woman should bless her man with a clean happy home because she respects him and herself, and 2. I have found that for me a general attitude adjustment, i.e., spanking or sex or especially both, always serves as motivation. I can go from shrew to domestic goddess in no time flat. It's in my wiring, I think.⁸⁶

"SAFEWORDS" (6 NOVEMBER 2003)

The use of safewords is a complicated issue, in my opinion. Many people think a couple should always have a safeword, but many others feel like an important part of the

trust and submission involved in DD is the acceptance of spanking without a safeword. Personally, I've come around to the point of view that ultimately it doesn't really much matter in practice whether a safeword exists or not.

On the one hand, safewords are not nearly as big a protection as is sometimes asserted, for a variety of reasons. If the purpose is to give safety when you don't fully trust a spanker and fear he may be unscrupulous, I don't quite understand how that works—if he's unscrupulous enough to go beyond agreed-upon limits, isn't he equally likely to ignore a safeword? In the more common case, the point isn't to protect against an unscrupulous spanker, but instead to allow communication of something the spanker doesn't see or understand. While that's fine so far as it goes, there are a lot of reasons it often doesn't work. If the spankee is really in distress for some reason, she may well not be able to say the safeword. Even if she can, almost every woman I've ever talked to has been extremely reluctant to actually use a safeword—to many it feels like admitting failure of some sort, even though that's not the intent. In other instances, the safeword comes too late to be of much use—the spankee doesn't become aware of the problem until it's already happened. To use a very extreme example, suppose a spanker is using a heavy paddle, and accidentally strikes too high and hits the tailbone, bruising or even breaking it. Saying a safeword at that point doesn't help much since the damage is already done. For these reasons,

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the spanker still has to be very aware and careful at all times how he is spanking, and how the spankee is reacting, both verbally and non-verbally. Assuming that everything is fine as long as the spankee doesn't use a safeword can be a very big mistake...

On the other hand, I don't think having a safeword automatically changes the dynamics of the DD relationship and is equivalent to "topping from the bottom". While that may be true in an erotic setting where the couple agrees on a red/yellow/green (stop/ease up/continue) scheme to control intensity, I don't think it's true in a DD setting where the safeword is intended only to signal when something unexpected has happened. A couple can arrange it so that misuse of a safeword doesn't have any real benefit, and may itself be a punishable offense. As such, a safeword isn't the spankee's way of controlling the spanking, it's just a method of communicating important information to the spanker, and can even be viewed as the duty of the spankee, as part of making the spanking a cooperative effort to improve behavior.

On a third hand, I think those who profess not to use safewords are largely kidding themselves. After all, is any half-way responsible spanker going to ignore a frantic "Yeowch! You broke my tailbone!!" just because the couple doesn't have a safeword? Particularly when just starting a relationship, a spanker would have to be crazy to ignore unexpected protestations or movements—it's probably safe to ignore

squirming and "Please stop," but I sure wouldn't ignore a concerted effort to get away coupled with "If you don't stop this instant, I'm going to call the cops!" Heck, even if a safeword *does* exist, I think the spanker in a new couple would be foolish to ignore such a statement just because the spankee didn't say "safeword." At a lower level, why would a spanker ignore a statement like "Stop for a minute and empty your pockets; your keys are digging into me" or "Hold on—I've got a cramp in my leg"? Of course, I'm assuming that a responsible spankee won't make these things up, but that's just the same as assuming the spankee won't inappropriately use a safeword.

Having said all that, I'll admit to requiring a safeword when I'm disciplining a woman I haven't dealt with before or frequently, even though I'm not convinced it's all that useful to protect her. I think there's a little value in having a safeword to protect me, as the spanker. Although this is rarely discussed, I think it's important for people to keep in mind that anytime a spanking is given, the spanker is opening himself to both civil and criminal liability in most states—spanking fits almost any definition of assault and/or battery. So when meeting a new woman, there's always the chance that if things go badly for whatever reason she may decide to call the cops or a lawyer. Although the consent of the "victim" is largely immaterial in the eyes of the law—I'm still guilty of assault even if the woman asked for the spanking—as a practical matter I believe that I'm in

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a better position if I can show that the entire spanking was consensual, and the presence of a safeword helps there. Although if the woman is really out to get me, there's no way for me to prevent her claiming she used her safeword and I ignored it... I sincerely hope this concern will always remain hypothetical, but it's something for spankers to keep in the back of their mind. For that matter, spankees should understand it's another reason why some spankers may be reluctant to be as firm as desired; there may be a fear, either conscious or subconscious, that if he really hurts her she's going to call the cops.

Another factor in favor of safewords is a little paradoxical—the existence of a safeword, which a spankee may fear will result in her ending a spanking early, may instead have the effect of enabling a more severe spanking. Without a safeword, a reasonably responsible spanker is likely to err on the side of caution, and spank less severely than desired. After all, it's a lot easier to correct that next time by spanking harder than it is to make up for a too-hard spanking that leaves the spankee feeling unfairly treated or even abused. The existence of a safeword may give the spanker confidence to go further, knowing that the safeword will keep him from going *too* far over the line.

Finally, all of this is largely theoretical. In practice, although I know people that have safewords, I don't think I know of any instances in a disciplinary setting in which the spankee has actually used that safeword. The fact is, most spankers

and spankees, especially in DD, are pretty responsible, and unexpected situations (such as cramps) are pretty uncommon, so the need for safewords doesn't actually arise.

BTW, In case I wasn't clear, none of this was meant to recommend either for or against having a safeword. I think that's a decision best left to the couple, but I just wanted to give some more information for them to base their decision on.⁸⁷

“OBEDIENCE” (8 NOVEMBER 2003)

It may seem to many people that requiring my wife to be obedient, to follow my directives, is not only anachronistic, but considering modern social “norms” of equality between the sexes, is simply wrong. Yet, in my observation of modern relationships, too many couples I know or have observed are locked in a continual struggle for power. This struggle too often leaves the couple disconnected, unhappy, and disenchanting with the modern relationship. It is not my purpose to suggest that we all return to the social norms of an earlier age, but I do believe in the quest for equality between the sexes we have lost something special.

Right from the beginning of our relationship my wife wanted me to wear the pants in the family. As a matter of fact, those were the exact words she used. She is a highly intelligent, confident woman, who could survive quite well without me, but she really wanted me to be in charge. She was not interested in a relationship based on so called

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equality. We have a traditional marriage in which she expects to be obedient. To her, obedience is not only a matter of respect for me and our relationship, it gives her a greater sense of security knowing I am deeply involved in her and it also adds an erotic charge to our daily life. Yes, obedience is sexy. It is romantic. It creates passion! For her, knowing her man is in charge partly hearkens back to the kind of atmosphere between couples that was so often evident in some of the old movies she used to watch. You know the ones with Spencer Tracy and Katherine Hepburn or Clark Gable and Carol Lombard, or even John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara. I know this may seem hopelessly romantic, but don't we all want our relationships to be romantic and passionate?

It is the expectation of obedience that creates between us a real connection. I am not the kind of husband who gives many orders. My wife is a capable woman who does not need me to micro-manage her life. In fact, I believe when the head of a household attempts to micro-manage his wife's life it says more about his insecurities than it does about his power in the relationship. We most often consult on important matters. But our consultations are charged with the knowledge that I am the head of the household. I am more than willing to accede to her desires in many cases. I depend on her expertise and advice. But once I make a decision that this is the way it's going to be, she almost always agreeably submits. By being obedient, my wife

opens herself to intimacy, trusting that I will do what is necessary for her and us.

She does not really submit to me out of fear or because I am the head of the household and she had better do as I say or else. That is not the primary motivating factor for her obedience. It is true that the threat of a spanking always exists if she disobeys. And the certainty of consequences (a bare bottom spanking) may motivate her, but her decision to obey is really a matter of respect and trust. Her submission to me stems from her knowing me so well and loving me so much, that she *wants* to submit. She trusts me not to abuse the authority she has given me. It also fulfills the desire she has to be submissive to her husband. Being a Christian, she accepts her role as a submissive wife, but her submission would not be as pure or as meaningful if it were something that was forced or came purely from obligation and/or duty.

Some people make the mistake of assuming that if a woman is obedient she loses her autonomy. It may be true that she loses some freedom of action, but doesn't any relationship require the same? Neither am I free to do as I wish. A relationship requires a sense of mutual obligation. However, if I require my wife to behave or act in a certain way, she does so because she wants to and because I have proved my commitment to her. By agreeing to obey me, she surrenders to the discipline of our marriage. For her it is not so much a sacrifice, as it is a way to connect to me in a deep and meaningful way.

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Just because I require my wife to obey me does not mean our relationship is a one way street. If my wife asked me to do something, I would do it. I want to please her and make her feel cherished. But just as a captain steers a ship, so I have her consent to direct our relationship. She may say to me, "hey, let's check that out over there". And because I love her I would steer the ship in that direction. But I still would control the rudder.

It is difficult for me to understand how a taken in hand relationship could work if it were based on equality. It would lose much of its power to move my wife if there wasn't an expectation of obedience. What does it mean for the man to be the head of the household if the woman gets to pick and choose whether she submits to the man's decisions? My wife would be the first to tell you that that would weaken my authority and denature the dynamic we have together. My wife has accepted me as the head of the household (as undisputed "captain" of the ship!). We have an understanding of "dominant" and "submissive" as equitable and complementary and not "superior" and "inferior" and an acceptance of the "captain's" right to sanction behavior that is harmful to the relationship or to her. This does not mean a mindless obedience either. If I were to demand that she do something that was unethical or against her conscience, it would be her duty to a higher power or set of principles to do what she knows is right. However, if I was the kind of head of the household to demand such a thing I

would not be worthy of her trust in the first place.

Here is an example of how her obedience has played out in our relationship. Several months ago I told my wife that she needed to go to the doctor to have her shoulder checked out. For a year she has had trouble with her shoulder, but never did anything to alleviate the problem. Some nights while we were lying in bed she would be in tears from the pain. Claiming she was too busy, she didn't act on my advice, so finally I gave her a direct order to get her shoulder looked at. I gave her two weeks to make the appointment. The two weeks went by and she still hadn't made the appointment. She had disobeyed me. This ended up with her being turned over my knee for a paddling. There was nothing erotic about this spanking; it was a serious disciplinary session. The very next day she made the appointment. This is an example of the kind of control I exhibit in our relationship. We have established a relationship dynamic in which she knows that when I do give her an order she had better obey. She knows that the consequences of disobedience will most likely be a very sound spanking.

Every Taken In Hand relationship must depend on a certain amount of obedience. The very act of telling my wife she is to be spanked is an example of her obedience. When I tell my wife to take down her pants and get over my knee for a spanking or tell her to stand in the corner she may voice some complaint or plead for leniency, but she will dutifully do as I say. She is thereby making

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herself not only physically vulnerable, but emotionally vulnerable too. This is an important moment not just for her, but for me as well. By obeying me during a disciplinary session, she is creating and nurturing a dynamic that carries through into other parts of our relationship. Isn't this what we all find so powerful about a Taken In Hand relationship? It is this exchange of dominance and submission that makes this such a powerful dynamic.

For those who have their panties tied up in a knot at my audacity (conceit), please understand: this is truly consensual. Also understand that I do not give many orders. But I know that on the occasions when I do direct her to do or not do something she will (usually) obey. What particularly interests me about this is the effect such a trust between us creates—how that ripples into other parts of our life together. This obedience develops between us a tide of feeling that is truly powerful. If nothing else, my wife's decision to obey me creates between us a deep and abiding passion. Does this same passion exist in a relationship where both are equal? Hmmmm.... I wonder.

The fact that my wife obeys me does not mean that she does not hold me accountable too. She does. She will admonish me when I have thoughtlessly hurt her feelings or have done something that she believes is inappropriate. I want her to tell me when she thinks I am screwing up. I do not find this is incompatible or contradictory with the fact that she obeys me. It may seem contradictory, but in practice it is not.

She can tell me things because she knows I care about her and value her opinion. She knows I will take her feelings into account. Yet, even though she expresses these things to me, she (usually) does it in a way that is respectful of my authority as the head of our family. It does not undermine my dominance or her submissive nature. I can tell this just by the look in her eyes. Because I feel confident in my role within our family, I am able to humbly (usually) accept her advice and yes, even her expression of disappointment in one of my decisions or actions. In fact I would argue the man who cannot admit to his wife that he has done something wrong cannot be trusted and is not worthy of being the head of the household.

IMHO a taken in hand marriage depends on the obedience of the wife to her husband. Without obedience, the dynamic that makes taken in hand so powerful would be undermined and weakened. Obviously this a delicate matter, especially when in the early stages of a taken in hand relationship. In order to obey or submit, the wife must be able to trust her husband as the head their home. So, of course I would counsel that any couple starting out keeps their dynamic simple or limited to a few small areas that both can agree on. But over time as the woman gains more trust in her man as the head of the household she can comfortably give herself to him wholeheartedly. With this trust comes her submission to his authority which allows the Taken In Hand relationship to truly blossom.⁸⁸

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"FIRST YEAR TRIALS" (10 NOVEMBER 2003)

I had dreamed all my life about a loving, strong man who spank me for my own good. Someone strong enough to be in charge, and to take me in hand. So how come my first year of living with my dream man was so damned hard?! I was out of control, fighting Robert, yelling and carrying on, as if I were trying to destroy the relationship I had most desired. I've always thought that it was an issue of trust—of learning that Robert could be my lover, protector, and the head of household. And partly it was—I'd been taking care of myself in my own way, as best I could, for years, and it wasn't easy trusting Robert to do that for me. I also think some of it was real resistance to being told what to do. After all, when you are deep into a great novel and want nothing more than to finish it, it isn't easy to be told to turn out the light and go to sleep! Instant rage...!)

But now, into our third year of living together (and we got married recently, too!) I think that there's a little more to it.

I think that most of us carry within our psyches powerful erotic images. For me, those images have been part of my deepest fantasies since I was a little girl, like the age of 3! When we as adults try to live our realities in sync with our erotic-emotional psyches, we at get frustrated when our partners are not acting exactly as our "needs"—our erotic/emotional fantasies—dictate.

For me, that was a big part of my awful first year and a half. I think now a lot of my frustration was in response to those moments when Robert did not act like the fantasy men in my head; when he did not respond to me perfectly in concert with the endlessly patient, endlessly giving, all-knowing perfect Daddy/man/Dominant in my head.

Eventually I groped through all these powerful emotions and got sick of myself—thank God before Robert got sick of me! And I realized how selfish, childish and unfair I had been. And with a little bit of effort and some help from Robert, I learned to stop pressuring him (through my behaviors and attitudes) to act like a character in one of the stories we all love so much. ("Ok, Susie, now you've gone too far. I cannot allow you to be so out of control, it's not good for you and it's not good for us. You know you have this coming to you, so march upstairs right now for your spanking.")

All I can say is it takes tons of patience to work out the kinks (pun unintended). It's really hard for us women/girls at first, because we have to be both real adult women (full partners in establishing a relationship) and be able to let go into the little girl/submissive/disciplinee regression that our partners also need and want from us. No wonder we get frustrated!

I don't know, it seems that a hell year or two is common. Maybe we have to get the brats out of our systems? My Robert had had his fill of "brat" after about a year, and when I realized how bad for us my

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brattiness was, I stopped. By then I had learned to trust him and I also learned that I could exhaust him! I didn't want to exhaust him anymore, I wanted him to enjoy me! So I cleaned up my act...:) I found a way to live with a real life man and thoroughly enjoy our relationship! It isn't exactly like the fantasies in my head, but it's real, and it's warm and close and loving, and I am happy. Happier than when I was out of control—out of control trying to control my partner!⁸⁹

"BLUSH AND GARY, BY GARY" (11 NOVEMBER 2003)

Hello to all;

My name is Gary and I am married to the woman you know as Blush. My Blush has asked me to clarify our life together to all of you that participate in this forum. I am, of course pleased to do so. The commitments of my job along with the high maintenance levels required by Blush do not afford me the luxury of being a regular participant in this forum. However, Blush takes great delight in sharing some of your experiences with me so to that end I feel a certain level of knowledge about many of your individual situations.

Now, before I tell you about our situation it is absolutely imperative that you understand a little more about where Blush comes from before I entered her life. If you do not take the time and compassion to understand this or discount its importance then you will not understand the essence of our evolution.

Blush has been savagely abused since she was a young girl. Her parents were and still are unconscionable physiological abusers. She was left from the time she was 4 years old to raise herself with the specter of this horrible mental abuse consuming all of her developmental years. I will not go into details because this information will be extremely unsettling to some of you.

From this background she naturally gravitated towards men who would further this abuse. After all, that is really all she knew. This culminated in a marriage in her early 20s that introduced horrible, disgusting and dehumanizing ritualistic physical abuse that occurred on a daily basis for 10 years.

From this information, I think you can see what impact this would have on her. Not many people could thrive after this type of upbringing and marriage let alone survive it. This, along with some other events in her life made up the person I first met some 4 years ago. When you first meet Blush you are immediately struck by her obvious physical beauty but that is not what really attracted me to her. You see, she has this unbelievable indomitable spirit. No matter how much life and the sick people who infected her life tried, they could not extinguish the light, that beautiful shining light inside of her. She is like a closed flower that turns to open to the sun to show its wonderment.

When I came into her life, I saw this light in her but it was also very apparent that she had deep scars. She never slept more than an hour or two a night if at all, she never

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entered a room where she didn't immediately have an escape route mapped out and was forever craning her neck looking for those that would attack her. She had deep insecurities, trusted no one and easily blew off suitors in an almost callous manner. She became an expert at deflecting attention from herself and let no one, I mean no one get close to her.

When I first met her, I decided that we needed to get to know each other intimately and slowly. So we talked on the phone before we met. Then we talked and talked and talked some more. When we had talked ourselves out, we talked some more. I can tell you that Blush has a very layered and complex mind with a myriad of closed doors inside that all contain a fountain of information if they could be accessed. As a student of human nature, I found her fascinating and still do. After a very long time of highly intimate talks I can assure you I know more about her than she knows about herself. While she is extremely good at knowing what makes other people tick, she was not able to do the same when it came to herself. I can pinpoint exactly what is going on in that mind of hers just by doing some very gentle and focused probing. There is very little, if anything that she can hide from me and this gives her tremendous peace of mind and security.

However, she was always in a hurry—hurry up let's meet, hurry up and spank me, hurry up and do this to me, hurry up and do that to me. In many ways her life was careening out of control. I liken it to what I see

in a lot of long time marriages that introduce D&D into their life to solve various problems. The image is her driving a car with me as a passenger. She is driving this car 100 mph straight at a brick wall. Just before the car hits the wall, she jumps into the back seat and says, "here, you drive!"

Her fantasies at the time were very vague and unfocused. She had two main fantasies, one in which she was aroused by an authority figure, and may involve being spanked. The other was a fantasy of the man who loved her, who would come and rescue her. Although I didn't tell her in so many words, it became apparent to me from our many conversations that there was the germination of submissive potential here. At the beginning she couldn't even say the word spanking because to her it sounded too submissive.

Now given all of this information I needed to ask myself how to proceed. I know this beautiful woman had an undeveloped submissive side to her but her life had caused many, many wounds that could easily be exposed if this was done recklessly. I also needed to know and fully understand the ramifications of this to my life. First of all, it has to be understood that if I didn't love her I couldn't do this. To any man wanting this lifestyle, there are three unbreakable rules. Rule # One, you gotta love her! Full stop. Rule Two, see rule One. Rule # Three, see Rule # 1 and 2. No exceptions. If you don't love her and I mean really love her, then do not proceed.

The next thing you have to understand is that this is not a part time

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lifestyle. For me, I have to accept the responsibility and step up each and every day, all day. I never take time off from this. I am always available to her for every one of her needs bar none. Nothing about her is too trivial for my attention. If I have been traveling on business all day and am tired when I get home and Blush needs me I will always be there for her and will put her needs in the front always. We never turn on the television. Instead we have what I call transition time. That is the time of day when our daughter is asleep and before we go to the bedroom. It is a time where she can unburden the trials of her day and ultimately let them go. While she is doing this my eyes never leave her and I am completely focused on her. At the end of transition, she has let her burdens go. As a result she has gone from someone who rarely slept at all to someone who easily sleeps nine hours a night.

I understand that this is not for everyone but if you want to reach the levels that we do, this is the commitment that needs to be made.^{1/2}

Before I allowed her to be spanked at all by me, there had to be a strong level of security for her. We were treading in very dangerous and uncharted waters here. I will not be another one of her abusers and will forever protect her from those that try. So, how does one proceed? I decided the safest way was to sexualize it. Making it safe, and making it occur while in a high state of arousal would make it secure for her. You see, when one is in a high state of arousal and passion takes

over, your mind justifies what is happening to you as being out of your control and thus easier to accept. Under these conditions she thrived. Passion is a very strong and powerful emotion. I would have her repeat things to me that she could never have said outside of a highly aroused state.

For those that would question whether this is true dominance I would ask you the following. While I don't mean to be overly graphic here, when I punish Blush she is wet at the onset and soaking at the conclusion. Does this make it sexual dominance or is it still punishment? You see, from this beginning we have evolved tremendously. While previously she could never, ever consider herself as a submissive she now accepts and revels in her submissiveness. However, I do not allow this to become part of her complete personality. She is not a submissive person except to me and I abhor the term "slave". If I were to catch her submissively allowing a shopkeeper to mistreat her, I would immediately put a stop to it. He would be forced to apologize to her and she would be called to account to me for her actions. However, in my presence she will submit unquestioningly and completely to me. That is how it is. I have certain expectations for her behavior and actions and will relentlessly enforce them.

An example. Last week I was away on business for a week and left Blush with certain expectations I had for her. When I returned I found that she was slipping back into some old, familiar patterns of self-destructive

behavior. This, to me is completely unacceptable and she needed to be reminded of that. Her self destructive behavior was actually caused by her being angry with me for being away for so long and because she is not yet able to direct this anger towards me where it belongs she takes it out on herself. I do not permit anyone to abuse her and certainly will not accept it from herself, so she was punished very sternly. The result was an unbelievable re-connection and her behavior back in line. I recognize that we still have a long way to go but the punishment she receives focuses her on what I expect from her and gives her the security she so desperately craves.

From the first erotically inspired spankings to the unrelenting punishment she now receives, I can tell you that she thrives in the security and connections that it brings. She has forever been changed and her future will bring deeper and more profound changes. She is indulged by me to the point of being spoiled and for that I make no apologies. But make no mistake—I own her and she belongs to me. She is no longer that scarred girl I first met. She is a beautiful, intelligent almost childlike spirit that has simply thrived in our life together and the sweet intimacy that it brings.

I apologize for the lengthy diatribe, but she is a passion of mine and I could go on and on. I would be pleased to clarify or answer any further questions you may have but that is as honest and raw a recollection of our life as I can tell you.⁹⁰

"HOW WE GOT PAST THE YEAR FROM HELL" (12 NOVEMBER 2003)

I've written before* about how trying our first year together had been. I think a combination of things worked to get us to a better place. A *big* one was that Robert took me out of my stressful job (running a hospital ward on a fulltime basis) and enabling me to work from home (doing telephone medical triage one evening a week and two weekends a month). *Much* less stressful! I really consider myself a "work" from home homemaker and mom now. And so now I am not stressed out to the max, which helps everything. And Robert works from home, so we're essentially together 24/7. I love it. :-)

Second, we learned that micromanaging me doesn't work for us. I am not only capable of running the domestic side of our lives, I love it. Just call me Susie Homemaker. :-) So I pretty much cook, clean, grocery shop on my own steam. If Robert wants something done at a particular time or in a particular way, he tells me, and I do it.

I still do get angry at some things. I *hate* being told to go to bed. I also dislike having to ask for money for things other than groceries, because I hate to be told "no!" "No, Susie, I'm sorry you can't buy that dress, it's not in the budget and you don't need it." Argh! But I don't lash out anymore...I grumble and I complain a little, but I don't rage at him. Just as I make the effort not to react badly

* "First year trials," 10 November 2003.

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ly or behave brattily, *he* makes the effort not to thwart me for trivial reasons. We've fine-tuned the dynamic to suit us. :-)

See, there's no prize for having the most masterful hubby, or for getting the most dramatic punishments... there's only the prize of your beautiful, unique relationship with your unique partner.

So yeah, I still get mad, only not as often and not as intensely. :-) Here's where spanking comes in... (you knew it had to be in here somewhere, no?) When I get into a mood where I feel cranky, out of sorts, or just uppity, that's when a spanking—not punishment—a “just because” spanking puts me right. It makes me feel little and loved and grateful. I'm not talking erotic spanking, the kind we do because it gets us both hot, with lots of touching and rubbing, I'm talking a businesslike “you need this and I'm going to give it to you” spanking. When it's over and I'm sobbing into Robert's shirt I feel as if all is right in my world. Then I get up with a smile, suffused with loving feelings, and have a *much* better attitude. So a big dose of rational self-talk plus a good spanking now and then gets us and keeps us happy.⁹¹

“ROMANTIC RITUALS FOR THE TAKEN IN HAND” (13 NOVEMBER 2003)

When Gary and I are out, he always puts my coat on, and then I have to turn to him so he can do it up. It's one of our little rituals that was one of the original things I had to submit to. Now we just do as a

way of life. But so many people notice him doing it. It's amazing. And we get comments too. How romantic we look. “Your man sure takes care of you.” Or, I sure am lucky to have a man who is so attentive.

But the funniest was this past September. Our daughter started a new primary school. In the second week I think, we happened to be home together and both went to pick her up after school. Because the weather had been so beautiful, I had been staying after school and using the playground to burn some energy off her. I would sit on the bench. This time Gary was with me. When it was time to go, we all walked to the truck.

As usual, I get in, but Gary puts on my seatbelt, kisses me and shuts my door.

Well the next day at pick-up time, a woman whom I'd been friendly with at park time told me I caused such a ruckus. All the other mothers saw what Gary did—putting me in the car and all—and they couldn't stop talking about me, apparently.

I thought that was hilarious. Gary says each time we start a new school or something we have to train the onlookers. Because we really do things differently from other couples.⁹²

“IT'S LIKE THIS, BELOVED: I NEED TO BE SPANKED” (15 NOVEMBER 2003)

Owing to some misunderstandings in regard to this piece, may I stress that this is fiction: it was inspired by a question posed on one of the DD groups by a woman with a husband

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who sounds lovely but who had not cottoned on to her desire for a serious whipping now and again. I myself do not have a husband of any description, I am single!

My dear husband,

I have something to tell you. This is possibly the most important letter I have ever written to you. OK, OK, so it is the *only* letter I have ever written to you—but humour me, will you? This is important.

No, I haven't been up to no good with the milkman (though that strapping young man who is his son might be difficult to resist!), and no, I don't have any (more) complaints about you, and no, I haven't gone to the Dark Side and joined a religious cult or started using Microsoft products.

I don't know whether you have noticed, but I have been a pain in the backside lately. Actually, you don't seem to have noticed. And you know what? One of the things I totally love about you is that you are so serene, unruffled, and even-tempered. I love how you never lose your calm—it makes me feel so safe and relaxed and happy. Never change!

But given your marvellous imperturbability, I have realised that I need to be more direct when making requests. Telling you in words would be a good start. You can't be expected to be a mind reader—though you so often seem to know what I'm thinking... especially the other night when you.... well anyway, where was I? Oh yes. Important Information to Impart.

Do you remember the other day when you were lying on your front

watching that that old black and white film I wanted us to see—The Vagabond King—and you thought I must either have got the wrong film or that I must have completely lost my marbles?

And you know how, when you complained and wanted to watch the rugby instead, I grabbed that wooden ruler and whacked you on the bottom with it? (Yeah, like you could forget that!)

Well the good news is, I haven't turned violent, I was just trying to get a reaction out of you. I wanted you to get physical with me, *really* physical. I wanted to *experience* your considerable size and strength in a bit of old-fashioned wrestling roly-poly rough-and-tumble slap-and-tickle—with the emphasis on the “slap” bit.

What am I driving at?

Goodness, this is difficult!

I want you to put me over your knee (or on the bed, on the couch, or anywhere really) and—not to put too fine a point on it—give me a jolly good thrashing; and then give me a jolly good seeing-to, as only you can. And I don't mean just a one-off: I'd like this as often as your age, inclination, health issues, work commitments, and required TV viewing, will allow.

Incidentally, when I say “thrashing”, I mean *hard*, using all your strength! Really! (Just think, you can get an arm workout without going to the gym!) And I mean everything from spanking to whipping.

I know you wondered if I'd taken up riding when you saw that I'd bought a riding crop. And you must have thought it a bit odd that I sud-

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denly felt the urge to buy a set of extra strong wooden spoons – obviously, it couldn't be for cooking, given my singular lack of interest in that department! And then there is the old-fashioned schoolmaster's cane that appeared on your night table and that you asked me to remove. You didn't wonder about that *at all*?

And since I am coming clean here, you know how I've been behaving more and more like an irresponsible schoolgirl of late? You know – I've unaccountably started forgetting to take my mobile phone with me when I go out, I've been not getting enough sleep, and on more than one occasion I have become so engrossed in er... my er... "internet research", that I have quite forgotten the dinner cooking in the oven (hence your recent characteristically mild enquiry about whether there is some medical benefit to be gained by eating charcoal).

Well first let me say once again how much I appreciate your imperturbability. I greatly admire your equanimity in the face of what would have driven lesser men to seek solace in the arms of a divorce lawyer. Forgive me. I don't want to irritate you – and evidently it doesn't work anyway! You're so solid and sensible! My rock! (And gosh, what a rock! Swoon! But enough of these irrelevant digressions.)

The reason I have been doing all these things is not a sign of encroaching menopause or early senility, it is that I have been wanting you to take control and take me in hand, and this was my way of attempting to communicate that to you.

Yes, I know, I know, what's wrong with the direct approach? And how did I expect you to guess this particular interpretation of my out-of-character behaviour? I concede that it hasn't worked at all, and I feel quite silly for having done this, and more than a bit remorseful.

I am so embarrassed! I don't know why, but it has taken a lot of nerve for me to pluck up the courage to tell you this. But now I have, might it be possible for us to talk about it? Do you have any questions? Is this something you could do? Can we have some fun with this?

Yours, as ever,
Etc.

[Husband reads the letter.... I look to see how he is taking it, and wonder how I am ever going to be able to introduce the idea of more serious "discipline" to him if we can't even manage to get to grips with the light-hearted fun variety....]

Hey, you're smiling! Splendid! Oh how lovely! What shall we.... HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! PUT ME DOWN! I didn't mean NOW! Not HERE! Oww! Oww! Hey, that HURT! Cut it out, you big bully! You don't know your own strength!

[Swoon... My hero....]⁹³

"THE CHANGES SHOW! WHAT SHOULD I TELL PEOPLE?!" (17 NOVEMBER 2003)

Something very interesting happened to me last weekend. My sister, Gwendolyn, came to visit us with her husband. Gwen and I have been very close for more years than I care to remember, but she and Zack

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have been abroad for the past year, in Africa, so we haven't seen one another for over a year and have not kept in touch while they were away.

When she arrived, we embraced in a great big hug, and then got straight into making coffee and catching up. She told me about their life in Africa ("our African adventure", she called it) and we each marvelled at how the other's kids have grown.

Then the kids wanted to go to McDonalds so my gorgeous husband took them all plus other hubby off, leaving me and Gwen in peace for a while.

The minutes the front door slammed behind them, Gwen said to me, "Debra, talk to me. What's happened? Something's different. You've changed. Is everything okay between you and Jerry?"

Initially, I didn't get where her questions were coming from. Jerry and I must have started exploring our natural tendencies towards dominance and submission over a year ago now, and the changes happened over time, so it took me awhile to realize what changes my sister was seeing in me. What she saw was a slimmer, more attractively dressed, more serene, more happy, more content, and yes, more in love looking woman than the one she'd seen last. Since Jerry took the reins and became the master of the house, my libido has gone through the roof, and our sex life is better than it's ever been. We're so in love! He's my knight in shining armour. He's so attentive and chivalrous to me now, I feel like a queen. I truly have the marriage I always dreamed

of, the one they tell you doesn't exist outside romance novels.

Gwen was so surprised by my new, more feminine, much more attractive style of dress, and by my peaceful, much more confident, happy air, that she thought I must be having an affair!

I told her that I am indeed having a steamy affair—with my husband. She wanted to know all the details. Even though we are very close, I did not want to tell her. Gwen is quite a strong feminist, and when I was involved in a BDSM relationship many years ago before I was married, and before I discovered what I really want (not BDSM!), she was upset about it when I told her about it. Her reaction then had surprised me, and I feared another bad reaction this time too. So I tried not to tell her. But she was very persistent, and then she asked if we'd gone BDSM.

I said no, I'm not into that, but I do think of Jerry as the master of the house, and he does make the decisions and expect me to obey at least some of the time.

"Does he hit you?" was her immediate suspicious reaction.

Well you know when you get asked that, there's probably no answer you can give that's going to sit well with them. So I ignored the question and pointed out that she had seen not an abused, battered wife, but a wife so happy and peaceful that she thought I must be having an affair! That worked. Perhaps a bit too well. She wants to know the full details. She wants to know what our secret is. She wants to know so she can try it too. Help! What am I

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going to tell her?! Has anyone else had this experience? What did you say? Please give me advice!⁹⁴

"SURRENDERED IN LOVE" (19 NOVEMBER 2003)

My wife and I have known each other for 35 years and been married 33. I am a young 63, she is 53, looks about thirty-five and acts like a delicious courtesan ... but only for me. About eighteen months ago, after one of our "you are my sexy-slave" erotic games (we have had a lovely fantasy sex-life for years) my wife said she wanted to be "surrendered" (as in *The Surrendered Wife*).

At first it was, perhaps, a joke or, more likely, because she realised something that I had not. Initially this was only part-time but very soon we realised that we both needed her to be totally surrendered, full time.

What does this consist of? She gets my total care and love and, since I retired early, my complete house-husbandry, including care of all our joint money and estate—and she now has a (substantial) "allowance". In turn, her watch-words have become: total care, love and obedience for me and to me. Now we both delight in living like this all the time.

Eighteen months on, we are both so much more in love and loving, and so totally together and inseparable, than we ever were in the rest of our happy marriage. (I'm obvi-

ously a late-learner. I guess it was all there for a long time and I just didn't realise how much she needed me to take total care of her.)

To reinforce what is now loving dominance and submission, we have recently added domestic discipline (DD) (i.e., spanking), mainly to help her with keeping to diets, not "losing" keys so frequently, etc.

We are both serially experienced university graduates and my wife has a very senior post in the outside world. Nobody in our wide family realises what we have discovered ... our two sons, 26 and 28, who have been living away from home since university, do, however, tend to think that we are like love-crazy teenagers. My wife laughs like a drain to think what some of her more starchy colleagues would think if they knew we had this delicious relationship. It has left our "old" marriage light-years in the past and we now live very happily on another planet, called "unbelievable love"—or anything you want to call total happiness.

If it sounds crazy and quite daft to you (and some readers are no doubt about to throw up), I suggest you try it... you might be amazed how much you might love it all. It could totally change your life for the infinite better—for ever. Neither of us were ever wild swoon-eyed romantics—both tough as boots—our professions needed it—but this is *great!*⁹⁵

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"LIBERATED THROUGH SUBMISSION" (20 NOVEMBER 2003)

Given my interest in the transforming power of consensual dominance and submission, you might not be surprised to learn that I read everything about this that I can get my hands on. When I heard about *Liberated Through Submission*, by P. Bunny Wilson, I ordered it immediately. It turned out to be a very short book which did not really say very much. Or perhaps it does but I was unable to get beyond the fact that the book takes very much a Biblical approach. However, there were a few good bits I thought I'd share.

One bit very close to my heart was about how traumatic housework is for many women. My comments are in square brackets.

She probably feels the task [i.e., housework] is extremely arduous and taxing. [Perhaps too arduous and taxing for a woman?] One thing is certain: too much pressure can have negative results and will place undue strain on the relationship. [...]

Don't fall into the trap of thinking that just because she's a woman, she should know how to clean. Develop ideas that will build her self-esteem and encourage her in that area. [C]onsider hiring a cleaning person on a weekly basis. [Only weekly?!] Whatever you do, your wife will appreciate your understanding... (p. 82)

Quite right. Learn from Ben's shining example!* His wife is totally sur-

rendered to him but he does all the housework. Sounds like heaven to me! (On the other hand, you might want to use the transforming power of your erotic connection to turn housework from a trauma into a turn-on. But more about that another time.)

This next bit, I include just because it made me laugh (but I'm laughing *with* him, not *at* him, so that's all right, isn't it?)

[A] man ... tearfully explained the difficulties he was having with his wife. After the man went through a long list of faults, my pastor asked him, "What was she like when you married her?"

"Oh pastor," he quickly replied, "she wasn't anything like she is today. She was so nice."

My pastor responded, "Well, she became the way she is now under your leadership!" (p. 77)

Yes, if you thought this was a book aimed at helping women to submit to their husbands in accordance with the Biblical injunction to obey, you were wrong. Or not wholly right, anyway. Quite a lot of it seems to be aimed at husbands. If you are Christian, you might enjoy this book. If not, I would not personally recommend it, despite the fabulous title.⁶

"WHY A MAN MIGHT BE RELUCTANT AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT" (21 NOVEMBER 2003)

Many women trying to introduce discipline dynamics into their relationship have trouble explaining their needs to their partner. They also wonder how to help the man

* 'Surrendered in love,' 19 November 2003.

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understand how discipline dynamics will benefit him and the relationship they both share. Over the course of several years I have seen and heard women try different strategies, some working fairly well and some not working well at all. Based on this experience, I propose a multi-pronged approach.

First, it is most important to have a good grasp of the nature of your own needs. Talk with other women who have taken this road with success—those in successful intimate discipline relationships.

So what is the nature of the need for discipline? We can argue *ad infinitum* whether the need for discipline is nature or nurture and none of this really matters in the end. The fact is that we have a very real need for this kind of discipline engagement, and we relish the kind of interaction we gain through spanking, especially when there is an appearance of control such as in discipline. Oftentimes, erotic bedroom play alone is not enough: we want the interactive force that seems to take away our power and control. Ultimately, discipline is a way of enriching our intimacy, a different kind of loving.

If your man enjoys erotic spanking, it is possible to explain your desire for intimate discipline control dynamics as another form of sexual expression; i.e. spanking and related behaviors are a way of enriching and deepening intimacy. In conventional lovemaking, a woman often likes to be held by the hands or pinned underneath the man. This apparent giving up of intimate control unlocks an exchange that is powerful

for both the man and woman. Discipline is like that—an exchange or interaction of the masculine and feminine sexual energy that manifests in deepening love.

If the man is hesitant at first to accept that you really, really want him to take this kind of control during the normal course of your relationship, the important thing is to listen to him carefully. Listen not only to what he is saying and asking, but also to clues of possible underlying unstated fears.

Here are some of the questions or concerns he may ask directly or may be thinking but may not voice.

1:) Do you want me to enforce your behavior, make you follow some set of rules or such? You are a grown woman so why can't you mind what you do yourself? It all sounds rather tedious and, to be honest, I really don't have the time or inclination to do this.

Do you really want him to enforce rules? Do you want to give him the impression that you want discipline because you have fundamental flaws in your personality or character that only a loving man can correct? Do you want to have the expectation that your partner should be responsible for your behavior within your intimate, adult relationship? If not, this perception of his, spoken or unspoken, must be corrected.

2:) Why can't we just spank like we used too? You know, when we are going to make love, kind of that kinky little element that is really so delightful?

In answer to this, explain how his taking control of the spanking has a

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much more powerful effect for you than the “fun stuff” alone does.

3:) It seems to me that you (the woman) may have some serious emotional disturbance. Perhaps you should see a doctor or a psychiatrist or something. Why else would you want me to beat you, forcing you to give up control of what you want? Why else would you want a pretty serious thrashing?

This thought is likely to go through most men's minds, so give it some serious consideration. You are perfectly normal, perfectly healthy, intelligent, successful in your life and in your social and professional standing. But you want your intimate partner to unceremoniously turn you over his lap and give you a sound bare bottom spanking. What could possibly be wrong?

Truth is, nothing is wrong. Spanking is inherently erotic. But the control element creates an intimate exchange that enriches the experience of both the man and the woman. The control is so crucial in this exchange that very little can be gained without it. Using spanking as the behavior gateway because of its erotic content for us, this control has the power to transform the man-woman intimate bond into something that is, for us, natural and sublime.

Spanking the woman with control has the power to give the man a real and conscious awareness of his natural place in his intimate relationship. He is in charge of the intimacy of the couple, not responsible for the behavior conduct of anyone but himself. This sense of his enhanced masculinity permeates throughout

the relationship, deepening his intimate bond of connection.

I think this will give many women a place to start explaining to the man what he will gain by beginning the practice of intimate discipline in his relationship. The details a couple chooses will vary as each relationship varies but, I think, the fundamental dynamic of discipline must be the same for all. Discipline, regardless of its form or context, always involves a fundamental dynamic exchange or interaction within our sexuality, an intimate connection of the masculine and feminine that is both delicious and sublime. We need the discipline or control to enhance this exchange or it is very weak. In the end, the man gains what the woman gains—a sense of his true self and his true masculine nature in his intimacy, the ability to deepen and genuine joy in experiencing greater depths in human love.⁹⁷

“HANDS-ON APPROACH” (22 NOVEMBER 2003)

I can't claim to have the kind of relationship that some lucky folks have documented on this site, but I can say that my wife and I have benefited from the discovery that I enjoy taking a more *hands-on* approach to dealing with her.

I've been married to Sam for almost 20 years, and for most of that we seemed to coast through simply on pure love and momentum. We hit the occasional patches of turbulence that affect most (if not all) long term relationships, and somewhere

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along the line it became clear that my wife needed a firmer hand to help her through the maze of depression and low self esteem that she seems prone to experiencing. These were the worst of times, but I found that if I took the view that they were merely dips in the road, we could rise above the situation and be rewarded with a view of life that revealed the potentials awaiting us.

When the world seemed too overwhelming to her, I offered her a shoulder to cry on, and two strong arms to envelop her in. Due to the issues of past abuse that Sam has had to deal with (she was raped a year or so before we met), there have been areas that were and are still off limits in our relationship. I lived with these limits for years before realizing that I resented them. I am not a man who is comfortable paying someone else's bills in perpetuity, so over the past couple of years I have been gently but firmly changing that.

To my delight, she is gradually discovering that physically-expressed control is not completely unappealing to her. Likewise, I am discovering the pleasure of forms of control that are much more subtle than I had initially envisaged. We are exploring together and creating something new that suits us as individuals and jointly.

I can't define our relationship using terms like "D/s", "BDSM" or "DD". None of those really apply to the level of subtle control she enjoys. She doesn't want to be punished (even when she brats), or feel that she is being treated like a child (even

when she acts childishly). So I try to love and control her to the extent she's comfortable with, then push it a bit further. When I get this right, she finds it exciting and pleasurable, and it also shows her that my needs are still present and as important as ever.

I believe that the key to increasing the sphere of control and discipline a woman enjoys is (1) to take it slowly, (2) to make the control loving and erotic for her, and (3) to be highly sensitive to any possible lack of consent. By "erotic", I do not mean role-playing or interacting in obviously-sexual ways. I mean that the man should find subtle ways of signalling to the woman that the control is erotic dominance rather than domineering control. Apparently there's a world of difference for women. :-)

My wife would not be able to function well if I pushed too far or too fast. I've found that I have to be extremely sensitive to her most subtle wishes in order to get this right. Consent is essential. But the more I get it right, the better our connection becomes.

Another thing I've discovered is that withdrawing and giving her space when there's a problem compounds the problem by adding a feeling on her part of rejection. It turns out that I need to be more demanding and almost selfish instead of giving her space. When I stay connected with her, even if I am being demanding, and sometimes especially then, she does not feel rejected.

Erotic spanking has brought us closer. It is not punishment; rather it is a non-subtle expression of my

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affection for her. It is something she can take or leave when it is on its own, but when it is part of a bedroom feast, it is the spice that can really bring out a deeper flavour of passion. In fact, now that she is beginning to see that the effect on me of delivering such attention to her beautiful behind is so positive, discipline is (slowly) escaping from being a bedroom-only activity. In a way, you could say that she is leading the way, with the gentlest of loving pushes from behind by me. To try to move any faster would cause us to crash and burn.

There are other aspects of control that I use to underscore the fact that she is loved, but that she is also *my* woman. Women seem to like it when their man's a bit possessive but not oppressive, don't they? Like when you show a little concern about what she's wearing when she goes out without you—is it modest enough? This type of control makes her feel desirable. Or when you insist on speaking to her internet friend before she meets her in person. This makes her feel protected. Some of the best forms of control are those that make her feel protected, loved and desirable. My wife loves that kind of control, and she also likes to please me, so I have her serve me in various small ways.

When I get home from the office, I sit down and she gets me a drink while we talk about the day. Then she kneels at my feet and takes off my shoes. In the morning, she brings me coffee and makes my breakfast. These little rituals are not time-consuming or arduous so she can do them without feeling like a servant.

She likes to please me but I can't push it too far. :-) She is very strong willed, but that's part of the fun. She does also submit to me and that brings us closer.

All this has meant an adjustment for both of us, and I try to handle my role responsibly, with regard for her health and wellbeing. We have been married a long time, but thanks to the discovery of spanking and control, we are still learning wonderful new things about each other and ourselves all the time. The journey continues.⁹⁸

"NO MORE WAITING!" (23 NOVEMBER 2003)

If your guy insisted on taking you to an important meeting then failed to get you there on time, how would you feel? If your guy said he'd pick you up at 6 PM and called you at 5:55 to tell you he was running late and would be there in an hour... and then he didn't show up till 7:30, how would you feel? What if it happened often, not just a one-off? Would you be happy about that? Girlfriend, are you a floor wipe or what?

This is not about being made to stand in the corner or go to your room when you've been a naughty girl, it's not about being made to wait all day for a spanking, and it's not about waking up in the middle of the night and your guy telling you to wait in safety while he bravely checks out what sounds like a gang of housebreakers but is probably just your cat knocking over a pile

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of junk your guy left on the kitchen table.

And sad to say, we're not talking the kind of waiting that makes you tingle and shake. This is not about being expected to wait for your guy to open doors for you or put on your coat. I'm not talking about the time he tells you to wait in the bedroom while the visiting beauty therapist gets set up, and you're shaking with anticipation and the fun type of fear of the unknown because your guy hasn't told you exactly what's going to happen. We're talking about when you're made to wait around because your guy's unreliable or chronically late. If you hate waiting and your guy makes you do a lot of it, it's time to do something about it.

First, have you told him you don't like it? Sounds obvious but you wouldn't believe how often women forget to tell the guy there's a problem. Yeah, I know, he oughta know! If the boot was on the other foot, he'd be real pissed. But he's a ~~man~~ your man, so cut him some slack. He's well-meaning, or you wouldn't be with him, right? If his girl's not happy, he's gonna want to hear about it.

When you tell him, ya gotta do it in a way he can hear. There's nothing more confrontational than an accusatory opener. Give him that and he'll simply shut down all systems and prepare for battle. Don't go there. Be nice. And don't repeat yourself over and over. He heard you the first time. And the second. And the third. He has a functioning brain, right? So tell him once only, then retreat and let him think about it some. ~~Men~~ People need more pro-

cessing time than we think sometimes. Give him that space and time. Wait!

When this has made no measurable difference after a reasonable amount of time (a decade?) has passed, if you're like most women, you'll go for The Suicidal Solution and tell him We Need To Talk. If you do that, you'll get to see how fast he can run. Then, if explaining your feelings over and over and trying to get him to promise not to be late again didn't work (duh!),

you can try getting mad at him and throw something. If you do this, be sure to duck. You're playing with fire, and you're gonna get burned. Some women swear by nagging and sulking. They want to make extra sure of getting a bad reaction. Let's face it, it would take a saint not to react badly to that!

The Suicidal Solution won't work except in cases of unusually good luck. It will make him either a) wander out into the back yard to find his missing running shoe (the one that went missing two years ago... in a different state),

or b) give a lot of plausible-sounding excuses, or dismiss your concerns, refuse to talk about them, and if he's *really* pissed, he'll accuse you of being controlling.

If your guy gives you the b) (that's "b"? as in "bullsh-t"?) response, you have only yourself to blame. The Suicidal Solution could have been called *How to infuriate just about anyone In microseconds*. I'm not saying there's no case to answer, I'm saying that whining, nagging and sulking is counterproductive. Ya gotta get smart!

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One way to get smart could be to use childlike anger (as in Helen Andelin's book, *Fascinating Womanhood*). That would be the soft, feminine little girl way. I'm gonna tell you the Str8 Talkin' Mutha way. If you can't take the heat, you know what to do.

A girlfriend of mine went through this with her ex (that's why he's ex). She told me that when she tried reasoning with her guy, he as good as accused her of being insufficiently submissive! He expected her to obediently wait around for him for hours just because he couldn't get his act together to show up when he said he would.

Then he accused her of trying to control him and of "topping from the bottom"? She calls this "the typical response of a passive-aggressive control freak." Ouch! Anyways, the Suicidal Solution didn't work for my girlfriend. Trust me, it sucks. So what can you do instead? If you've told him there's a problem and he's shown no sign of listening, it's time to stop reacting and start acting.

While taking action, be your usual sweet self throughout. (If you're not sweet, that could be part of your problem...) Never get angry. Never act sulky. Keep it breezy at all times. Be unthreatening. Don't act like you're at war. This is not a war, it's education in a language he can understand.

What do you do? If he keeps you waiting for 20 minutes, you keep him waiting for another 40. What's good enough behavior for him is good enough behavior for you too, right? If he tells you he'll be there in 30, then calls you in 30 to tell you

he's been delayed again and he'll be there "very soon"? ... and then calls you again 20 minutes later to say he'll be another half-hour, simply do the same to him.

Don't get mad, don't nag, don't sulk, don't cry, just do exactly what he does, only more so. Tell him you'll be there soon, assure him you'll be there momentarily, keep him waiting with any excuse you can come up with... and then sometimes (when it suits you) don't bother showing up at all. When he says he's coming over, and at the specified time he hasn't shown up, go out shopping. When he calls you on the cell to ask where you are, assure him you'll be there, and then continue shopping. When he calls again, say how sorry you are and that you are on your way—and try on another dress. Eventually, he'll get the message. Unless...

Wanna have some fun? Then try this next approach too. *Warning: high risk Str8 Talkin' Mutha strategy!*

Sometimes, when convenient, like when he's coming home, instead of not being there, be there, and be prepared. Have a range of implementations at the ready, and know how to use them. It's time the worm turned. He needs his hide tanned, and you're gonna do it for him. If he complains, too bad. He deserves it, and he knows it.

The details will depend on your relationship and the type of guy you're dealing with. You could try taking a very stern approach and appealing to his sense of fairness to get him to submit to the whipping. If that doesn't work, you might need to try more devious means. Does your

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guy like being given a massage? Then offer him one and he'll bare his butt without a murmur. Does your guy occasionally let you tie him up and having you use his body for your (and more to the point, his) pleasure? Then sweetly beg him to let you now, then tie him up, face down or on his side, and give it to him good and hard. Does your guy sleep? There will be a way.

If you sense real non-consent, obviously, stop. But chances are, he'll be tickled by it and enjoy having an excuse to put you over his knee to re-establish his authority. That's where the real fun starts! You'll both be laughing, and he'll have got the message too, without any of that whining and sulking and endless complaining less smart women do.

If the high-risk strategy's too much for you, you could show him this article and merely *threaten* him (playfully!) with a good spanking or, if you want to scare him real good, a whipping.

If he reacts badly and he still keeps you waiting and it's still not working for you, then girlfriend, it's time for Plan B. You need to walk. And I don't mean walk to meet him.⁹⁹

"WHY YOU SHOULDN'T MENTION THE 'M' WORD" (24 NOVEMBER 2003)

Okay, I confess! I misled you. This is not about the "M" word as in "marriage", it is about the "M" word as in "maintenance discipline".

Forgive me, but I'm with Aiden on this one: "maintenance" sounds like something you do on a car, not a woman. At any rate, "maintenance

spankings" are, as I understand it, spankings given regularly for no particular reason except that the woman is feeling the need for more discipline than she would otherwise get.

Women commonly complain that their men do not enforce discipline consistently, or that instead of getting out an implement, they go into their cave, i.e., withdraw, sulk, give them the silent treatment, or that they just plain don't spank them enough.

Well-meaning folk then urge them to ask their men for "maintenance discipline".

For some women, this is a frustrating and unhelpful answer, because if they have to ask to be spanked, it just doesn't feel the same. More importantly, perhaps, they have little interest in being spanked *per se*, what they want is to feel the authority and control (dominant constraint) of their man, and spanking only (or only strongly) gives them this feeling if it is for a reason. Being spanked out of a disciplinary or dominantly constraining context just doesn't feel the same, no matter how hard it is.

It is not that many such women don't want the more light-hearted, teasing, fun, playful sort of spanking—it is fun to play sometimes. It is that that sort of spanking does not fulfil their wish to be under the dominant authority of their man.

To be sure, some men are able to make their authority felt without any spanking at all. And some men are able to spank "just because they can" or in such a way as to make

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their authority felt, reason or no reason.

But if these so-called maintenance spankings leave you cold, the chances are, it is because they simply don't have the same meaning for you as the real thing for real reasons. Even if you both have in mind that this is what could happen if you disobey him—a “what to expect spanking”—it is still likely to feel different from the real thing, just as role-playing or playing feels different from the real thing.

This is not to say that those who are happy with regular spankings should change anything. Far from it! If you enjoy what you are doing, that is wonderful! (And when you're not getting any, believe me, even a light and quite inadvertent tap on the rear by the incontinent elderly gentleman who is behind you in the queue at the post office is enough to get you excited!)

But if you have found “maintenance spankings” frustratingly unmoving, you are not alone, and there is a perfectly reasonable explanation, as I have indicated.

As to what can be done instead, that is a good question. I think there is a good starting point for an answer in Aiden's article, “The path.” He points out that “a woman naturally pushes out against her man, wanting to feel the solid reassurance of his dominance, of his love, around her.” He suggests that a man who is attentive and aware of his woman's needs will notice the signs that she needs this reassurance that he is in control. So instead of being very easy-going about small matters and saving it all up for a major pun-

ishment spanking, one thing you could do, if you are the head of your household, is this. Try to become more aware of the little things and, when something happens, to ask yourself whether it is time to assert your authority in some way, perhaps by a spanking.

If a woman appears to be doing stupid things on a regular basis, or if she just seems to feel the need for more discipline than you feel like giving her, what she is really saying is that she craves more dominant control. If this is the case, introducing “maintenance spankings” might not be the answer, because it is not the spanking *per se* that she craves, but the dominant control. So it is worth thinking about additional, non-physical ways you could assert your authority.

There are many ideas on Taken In Hand. Sometimes, focusing narrowly on spanking alone can cause it to lose its meaning and thus its power. Remember: for many women, the point is not the spanking *per se* but the dominant authority it represents.¹⁰⁰

“BEING TAKEN IN HAND IS HOT!” (25 NOVEMBER 2003)

This desire for control is at least partly sexual. It may be indirectly so, but it is sexual nevertheless. We are thrilled in every way by that control. It is no coincidence that romance novels are full of strong, take-charge heroes. Many women are simply not attracted to men who lack the capacity to take them firmly in hand.

For such women, part of the erotic power of the idea of being taken in

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hand is in the very fact that the control of the man is real. For many women, if it were just a bit of fun, a bedroom game or a role-playing "scene", it would not have the power to arouse and thrill the way it does. This is not to disparage those who enjoy BDSM scenes: each to his own. But for the women I refer to, if the control were only ever expressed in role-playing scenes, it would not feel real enough. It would feel like a mere game. Some people do dismiss what we are doing as just a game.

It can be slightly irritating to be told that the way of life you passionately cherish is all just a mere game, but it is worth identifying the tiny grain of truth in that accusation, if only to be more clear about the way in which it is false.

What is the grain of truth in such statements? Other things being equal, a woman who craves a relationship with a take-charge man is choosing this of her own free will, and chooses it freely on an on-going basis. Conversely, a prisoner does not choose to remain in prison, he is there genuinely against his will. If he were at liberty to choose otherwise, he would do so (at least in most cases). Similarly, most children are not choosing genuinely freely to be under the authority of their parents and schoolteachers. If they could wave a magic wand and have their parents change from being involved and loving parents who spank them to involved and loving parents who don't, most would do so.

Can you *imagine* a child complaining that she doesn't get enough spankings? The idea is completely absurd. But women often complain

that their men do not spank them enough. And they most definitely would not want to wave that magic wand to turn their man into a non-spanker. If anything, they want him to be more bossy and forceful, not less. Unless the man is physically or mentally abusive. In which case, the woman would wave that magic wand to end the abuse but still have the love, just like most children would wave the magic wand to make their parents non-spankers.

In one case, there is wholehearted consent; in the others, the authority and control is against the will of those subject to it.

The word "authority" implies having the *right* to control and direct the actions of those subject to it. So it could be argued that since men and women are equal under the law, no man has real authority over his woman. And indeed, even if a man and a woman decide that the man does have that right, the woman is legally free to withdraw that right unilaterally at any time. The prisoner and the child are not legally free to walk out. So if you insist that the "right" implied by the word "authority" must be a legal right as opposed to any other kind of right, then it is true that the man has no more authority over his woman than she has over him. But why insist that?

You may want to argue that the fact that it is consensual proves that the dominant authority of the man is just a game. But if you do, you are missing something. You are simply *defining* "real authority and control" as non-consensual. That is all very well, but many of us experience

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what we think of as games very, very differently from how we experience this very welcome thing you think is just a game but which to us feels like very real control. How do you explain that? You can dismiss the experience of thousands of Taken In Hand readers if you want to, but that doesn't invalidate it.

Because the control needs to be real to have the powerful effect it has, some conclude that they must draw a hard line between what they call "erotic spanking" and what they call "punishment spanking". If they don't hate "punishment spankings" in exactly the same way as the average child hates to be spanked—then (their reasoning goes) we might as well pack up and go home and stop wasting everybody's time. If a punishment is in any way erotic, it must be just a game, a "scene", a "kink" or a fetish. But it does not follow from the fact that it is erotic that it must be just a bit of kinky fun, and we should resist the temptation to buy into this idea.

First, for some women, a serious spanking is not directly erotic at all, it is scary, painful and can be quite distressing. In some cases, there may be physical evidence of sexual arousal that the woman herself is not consciously aware of. In other cases, there is no evidence of arousal at all. And yet I still say that it is erotic. Why?

What is actually erotic is being under the control of the man. But because that control needs to be real if it is to have the erotic power it does, at some point, or on an on-going basis, the man needs to establish the reality of his authority. Is he in

charge or not? If he only spans her in a fun, playful way, and has never established his authority, there might be some doubt as to whether or not he is in charge. One way of establishing his authority (though by no means the only way) is through serious, non-fun disciplinary spanking. So how is that erotic?

Suppose a woman behaves unacceptably in some way, and the man takes the woman in hand and gives her a severe, painful spanking to show her who's boss and to let her know that he will not tolerate such behaviour. No matter how much it hurts at the time, unless something has gone wrong, the end result is that the woman feels a sense of submissive peace, love, a desire to please the man. She feels his, and she feels strong sexual desire for him. She might not feel this immediately after the spanking—the effect is not that direct, it works in a much more general way, assuring her of his authority over her. It is that authority—and the woman's awareness of and experience of that authority—that produces and maintains so powerfully those feelings in the woman. For the women I am discussing here, it is not spanking in itself that has that effect, it is the ever-present authority that the spanking represents.

If the man has not established his authority over her, she might not feel this strong sexual and emotional desire for him and connection with him on an on-going basis over the years or decades. But for as long as she is aware of his authority, she feels sexually and emotionally drawn to him. This is the sense in

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which so-called “punishment spankings” are erotic.

In my next article,* I address the following question: “If a woman finds the idea of being taken in hand erotic, how can taking her in hand also ‘work’ to modify her behaviour?”¹⁰¹

“I FEAR I HAVE AWOKEN A SLEEPING DRAGON” (26 NOVEMBER 2003)

I've been reading *Taken In Hand* since late September, but it wasn't until about a two weeks ago that I sat my husband down in front of the computer, got him a drink, and asked him—no, *begged* him—to read everything.

When he came to bed that night, I looked at him with a questioning expression, and he just shook his head. I could not sleep and had to go down to the kitchen to get a cup of tea and sit at the table crying my eyes out. We've been married a long time, and I love him with all my heart, so I could never leave him. But I had to face the fact that the direction I want our relationship to go in is not the direction he wants it to go in. The sense of loss was so bad, but what had I lost? Nothing had really changed. I still had my husband's love and devotion. I still had my marriage.

That was a fortnight ago.

Since then, I have bitten my lip every time I have wanted to raise the subject again. If he doesn't want it, he doesn't want it, and that's that.

No point arguing. You have to want it yourself or it can't work, so I tried to let it go, and cried inside whenever I thought too much about it all.

To be honest, a few days ago, I decided to stop reading *Taken In Hand* because I did not want to be reminded every day of my life of what I don't have. It seems as though you should be happy with what you have. Thinking about what you don't have could make you go mad with sadness. I have been living in a very grey world these last two weeks.

I even confided in a friend of mine about it. She was a bit surprised by what I want, but she told me that if this is what I want, to give up my dream would be to settle for less than I want. She said that if something really matters to you, you should never give up the dream, because to do so, you have to give up yourself, the heart of your Self. I asked her what the f--- I can do if my husband is not open to these ideas.

She said that if he is the man we think he is, and he loves me as much as we think he does, he will come round, or he will *try* to come round. She urged me not to make a big deal of it, not to mention *Taken In Hand* again, to give him time to think about it. Pushing him would likely have a counter-productive effect, she said. Knowing my husband, she was right. He has always hated to be pushed. So I waited.

Last night, something happened.

I don't want to go into the ins and outs of it all, but I have let him down badly this week, and the long and the short of it is that my husband is angry. Last night, he informed me

* “Why you should not withhold a spanking!” 29 November 2003.

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that tonight, I am to go to his study at 10 p.m., after dinner, and that he will give me six of the best with his cane. He said he will not use his hands on me and that his hands will only ever be used for loving touch, never punishment. That is all he said, and he would say nothing more, and has said nothing more since.

Now that he has said that, I am very scared. It is not what I envisaged. I envisaged being spanked with his hand over his knee in the bedroom, then making love afterwards. I am so scared. Suddenly it all seems very serious. I am not a masochist and I have an aversion to pain. Help! I lay awake last night worrying about everything. I feel such a jumble of emotions. Disappointment that he has made it clear he will never put me over his knee (I think!), confusion (why is he doing it this way? will he do it? what does this mean?), worried, and a fear that I had not expected. Is it normal for a man to be so serious about it and to refuse to talk about it, like this? I am scared.

And yet, as well as fearing what will happen tonight, and feeling all these other emotions, I am feeling elated. My heart is soaring. I am seeing the world in colour again. How can I be so terrified and yet so elated at the same time? How can I want this so badly and yet fear it so much too? And feel disappointed and confused and worried all at the same time?

What if something goes wrong and my husband does not do it? What if he does? Wish me luck, everybody. God knows I need it.¹⁰²

"EACH TO HIS OWN" (27 NOVEMBER 2003)

We have received an important communication from a chap called Dermot, writing from England. He says:

If [I] want submission, I'd prefer to ... buy a sheepdog and call him "old faithful"

Well Dermot, thanks for the idea. However, my guess is that given a choice between a sheepdog and a human being, most Taken In Hand readers would probably have a slight preference for the latter. I may be going out on a limb here, but I'd hazard a guess that quite a few aren't into bestiality at all.

Have a nice day, Dermot, and let's hope the RSPCA people are not reading this now.¹⁰³

"WHO NEEDS FORBIDDEN FRUIT WHEN YOU HAVE THIS?!" (28 NOVEMBER 2003)

If some of the posts I've seen here are anything to go by, the sort of relationships we talk about here on Taken In Hand are taboo. Society disapproves, as it were. We are refusing to toe the line. We are "unhealthy", "weird", "retrogressive degenerates", "in need of psychiatric help", and "should be ashamed of [ourselves]". Rather than let this get me down, I like to look on the bright side. (There is always *something* to be glad about, as Pollyanna would say!)

Not surprisingly, the vast majority of Taken In Hand readers are "in the closet", fearing ruined careers and

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goodness knows what else if others were to find out about their interest in Taken In Hand. This is forbidden, taboo, beyond the pale.

It is often said that forbidden fruit tastes sweeter. This is reputed to be a large part of the attraction of having illicit affairs. The bright side of the social disapprobation Taken In Hand attracts is that Taken In Hand couples don't have to be unfaithful to each other, they have the thrill of enjoying forbidden fruit right there in their relationship. How many other ways are there to taste forbidden fruit without actually doing something destructive or wrong?

That what we are doing occasions such disapproval and intolerance on the part of otherwise liberal-minded folks may be a little disheartening at times but it does tend to draw Taken In Hand couples together, and thereby creates virtuous circle upon virtuous circle within their relationship.

If you doubt whether this kind of relationship is a good thing, ask yourself what lessons can be drawn from the differences between the way conventional couples describe their relationships, and the way Taken In Hand couples describe their relationships. Ask yourself why it is that most conventional people find themselves settling for stale, lifeless relationships with unsatisfying sex, whereas people writing on Taken In Hand and other such sites often mention that their desire for one another is hotter than ever even after decades in some cases. This is no coincidence! Think about it! These relationships are not just forbidden, they are inherently

hotter and more connected. Could that be *why* others disapprove so strongly, one wonders?¹⁰⁴

"WHY YOU SHOULD NOT WITHHOLD SPANKING!" (29 NOVEMBER 2003)

In the first article* in this series, I said that many women want to be under the loving, protective *dominant control* of their man. In the second,† I argued that being taken in hand is not just a game, but that it is erotic. You might want to read the first two articles before you read this one.

"If a woman finds the idea of "getting a hiding" erotic, how can it also "work" to modify her behaviour? Spanking would be a reward, not a punishment!"

Punishment implies subjecting a person to pain, confinement, or some other disagreeable consequence such as confiscation of something that person values, or being made to do something unpleasant, like writing lines or a letter to the tax people. Doing something the person loves would appear to be counter-productive: how could something the person loves be unpleasant for them?

Is it that punishment spanking is to non-punitive spanking what rape is to consensual sex? You can love sex but find rape unbearable.

No, that comparison does not hold up under scrutiny. In the case of

* "Why you shouldn't mention the 'M' word," 24 November 2003.

† "Being taken in hand is hot!" 25 November 2003.

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real, non-fantasy/fun rape, the woman absolutely does not want it, and if she could avoid it, and never experience it, she would. By contrast, plenty of women do long for their husbands to take them in hand. Such women may feel “unwillingness” and “fear” in association with a serious spanking, but nothing like the very real fear and non-consent a woman who has no interest in being taken in hand would feel. In that case, the spanking is abuse. In the first case, the woman finds the possibility that she could be taken in hand erotic, and on some level she really wants it, “unwillingness” notwithstanding.

But if it is erotic, how can it possibly work to modify the woman's future behaviour? If you want to punish people, you impose a negative consequence on them, you don't give them something they have been longing for for the last thirty years. So men new to these ideas often decide that the punishment they will give their women is *not* to spank them. They withhold spanking. If taking a woman in hand were simply about using punishment as a deterrent, then this would make sense. But it is not that simple.

The underlying aim of all this is to create and maintain a good relationship—an evolving, ever-improving, intimately-connected relationship in which problems get solved and the partners retain sexual desire for each other. It is not about knocking a faulty woman into shape. If it were, why should any man want such a tiresome burden? Why not just get a dog? And how many men would feel perfect enough to stand in

judgement over their woman? Let's face it, chaps, more often than not, she is a lot more sensible, reasonable, capable, and responsible than he is, so presumably she would have her hands full knocking the faulty man into shape too!

Whilst some women do valiantly take on that gargantuan task, in many cases, that is not what happens, and no matter how many glaring faults in need of correction the man has, he is nevertheless the one in control. That is what both of them want. And it can make the difference between an unfulfilling, lifeless relationship, and a vibrant, sexually and emotionally fulfilling one that facilitates the growth of both persons.

Friendships can be close and intimate and fruitful, as can parent-child relationships. What distinguishes a friendship from an “intimate relationship” is the sexual element. Maintaining high contrast between the man and the woman is sexy. The more similar the man and the woman become, the more indistinguishable they are, the less interesting they become to each other, and the less they desire each other. When a man is dominant, and not just as a bedroom game—when the woman feels his authority all the time, when she knows that he will not hesitate to take her in hand if he thinks it necessary—the woman's desire for the man is phenomenally intense. She is aware of his otherness, his masculinity, his power. This prevents her from feeling like his mother, his boss or his teacher, and thereby losing desire for him. The man in turn feels more desire for the woman. Instead of turning

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the man off by reminding him of his controlling mother, boss or teacher, the woman remains a *woman* to him. Their connection is better in every way.

But that's not all. One of the problems of conventional relationships is that small errors in signalling and interpretation lead to huge fights and, worse, to withdrawal and stonewalling. The most trivial problem can turn into an all-out war. Even tiny accidents and misunderstandings can set off a chain of events leading to an out-of-control downward spiral of ill-will and misery. You think he is being unfriendly (when in fact he is just preoccupied) so you are slightly less friendly yourself. He subconsciously notices your slight negativity, and responds more guardedly than he would otherwise have done. You think he is being unpleasant and can't understand why, and you feel annoyed and respond accordingly. He thinks your evident annoyance is out of order and becomes annoyed himself. And pretty soon you have a fight on your hands. And all because of a tiny mistake in your interpretation of his state of mind at the beginning of the interaction. Unfortunately, many conventional couples simply have no means of arresting such downward spirals of bad feeling.

One of the most important benefits of the kind of relationship we talk about on *Taken In Hand* is that it embodies powerful error correction. No, I do not refer to the errors of the allegedly faulty woman, I am talking about the tiny errors in signalling and interpretation—the little misunderstandings that happen between

people all the time—that can so often end up in what feels like a descent into hell.

Instead of allowing little problems to metastasise into misery, accusations, fighting, or icy silence, the dominant man can use serious discipline or some other way of expressing his authority to invoke the relationship. Instead of withdrawing and breaking their connection, he can, through taking or re-establishing control, highlight and re-affirm his commitment to their relationship. Taking a woman in hand is a way of invoking the relationship that can be done without losing face, without any damage to his pride or ego, and without any emasculating grovelling to the woman or loss of power on his part. Through this action, he signals to the woman that he is ready to put the troublesome issue behind them rather than dwelling on it, fighting about it, sulking or stonewalling. It minimises if not eliminates the build-up of niggling resentment that can do so much damage to relationships.

He is also re-affirming his love for the woman and his trust in her. In asserting his authority and requiring his woman to submit to a serious spanking, he is trusting that she will submit rather than call the police or tell him where to stick it. This is a powerful symbol of his commitment to the relationship, and in a way, the more serious and real the discipline he is imposing, the more he is reaching out to his woman.

Similarly, when a woman submits even to serious and possibly painful discipline, she thereby affirms her

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acceptance of her man's authority as the head of their household. This is a powerful statement of her love of him, and (whether she admits it or not!) of her submission to him as her man. In consenting to the discipline he wants her to accept (even if she doth protest!), she is likewise signaling her willingness to put the matter behind them instead of allowing it to pollute their interactions in the future.

Just as the man's actions are a way of reaching out to the woman, so her submission amounts to reaching out to her man. This tells the man loud and clear that their relationship is very precious to her. In putting herself in his hands, she shows that she belongs to him and totally trusts him. She is showing that she considers their connection more important than any particular disagreement or other issue they might have. She is raising a white flag and diffusing any potential hostility before it becomes an ugly confrontation. Submitting to her man's authority, even if that means a serious spanking, is an affirmation of the relationship. It communicates her love.

Much of the communication in a serious spanking is tacit, not explicit, but it is important, valuable communication nonetheless. And how much more fun it is than a horrible war of words—in retrospect if not at the time! A serious spanking is a short, sharp, dramatic way of settling a matter. It clears the air. It gets any bad feeling out of the couple's systems, and it often leads to passionate sex which is, I'm sure you'll agree, a very much underrated cure for most of life's ills (or at least ill-

feelings)! Then, when the two individuals are feeling good about each other again, they can then talk constructively if anything remains to be resolved after the spanking.

The way serious disciplinary spanking works is not by acting as a deterrent, but in this more indirect way. Paradoxically, its effect is positively encouraging rather than negatively deterring. It re-affirms each partner's love, commitment to, and trust of the other, and repairs any break in their connection. It represents the man's authority and thereby helps to keep the sexual tension white hot. It makes the woman feel an incredible sense of peace, contentment, and passionate love, and that makes her want to do anything and everything she can to please her man. And when his woman loves to please him and is peaceful, happy and always wanting him, the man is happy and relaxed too.

So if you are new to this kind of relationship and you are thinking that surely it would be more effective to *withhold* spanking, because your woman loves to be spanked, that reasoning is understandable, but it is a huge mistake. Spanking is not compulsory, and there are other forms of discipline and other ways of expressing your authority, but to *withhold spanking in order to punish her* is a psychologically violent act. It raises walls between you; it is taking a step away from your relationship; it is a declaration of hostilities. The primary object is not actually punishment, it is your sexual and emotional connection. Giving her a good spanking can solve a problem quickly and cleanly and works *for* your

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connection; withholding spanking works *against* it.¹⁰⁵

"HOW I FEEL BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER BEING SPANKED" (1 DECEMBER 2003)

Before...

A deep arousing sensation wells up inside my lower abdomen when you firmly tell me you are going to spank me. It is partly sexual in origin, partly emotional.

The sexual aspect has to do with being naked, over your knee, close to your body. It has to do with you seeing my bottom bare and vulnerable. It is the feel of your firm hands touching me, holding me down. It is knowing we will share loving feelings when it is over.

Emotionally, it is knowing you are in charge and will handle my behavior and make decisions without my input. It is a pleasurable feeling to have you deciding how I will be disciplined—comforting at some distant level. The nature of this pleasure is what draws me to you, allows me to give consent for you to accept control. I know it will hurt, but I will never be hurt.

It is wonderful to have such trust in each other. We do not get an opportunity for that very often—to have complete trust in another person. It is rare and unique. I do not consciously think these thoughts each time—my body's sensation is enough to flood me with a sense of wellbeing. It leaves a smile inside me.

During...

Fear—definitely fear—not of you, but of the paddle. Excitement... as I go over your knee, as my panties are being pulled down, when I feel your leg go over mine to pin me in place... giving up control to you... moving to a place where I have to obey... where you are in charge, and I will be cared for and taken care of, where I feel you totally engaged with me.

Pain... while the actual spanking is happening, I think of very little else but the pain. I am begging for it to stop, I want to make you stop. I just hurt so badly, I have an almost overwhelming urge to interfere with the paddling, my hand, kicking, I want a pillow on my backside, so you cannot spank my bare bottom. I want to jerk my bottom out of your reach, but I am trapped solidly between your legs and arm, and I want to cry in desperation.

When it is a truly hard spanking, I feel such helplessness that I cannot interfere with it. I can only choose surrender to your discipline, until it is done. Then toward the end, fear wells up again, as I always think the last spansks will surely be the worst. I wait for those, wanting them to come, but not wanting to feel them, great ambivalence. I am never angry, never. Instead, at the end, I am tired but refreshed, content.

After...

I need you. Total surrender leaves me very vulnerable. I feel little and tender. I want you to hold me, tightly. I need your arms around me. I want to talk, maybe cry. I feel deeply connected. A very peaceful calm stays with me for a very long time, if

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it has been an emotional experience, which it always is. It is one of my most powerful experiences, it changes me. It creates a calmness within me that radiates a joyful existence. I notice it every day.

The burning on my bottom is pleasant. If it is tender the next day, I am happy. I enjoy looking at the redness, I enjoy you looking at it if I am in the corner. Sometimes I need you to spank me again. It never hurts the second time, at least not much.

There are really no negatives to a discipline spanking, except the spanking itself, but even this is not true. I like that too. I like the touch, even if it is painful; it is a path to a place I need to go with the one who holds my deepest trust.¹⁰⁶

"I WANT IT ALL, AND I WANT IT NOW!" (3 DECEMBER 2003)

"I want it all! I want it all! I want it all! And I want it *now*!"

—Queen: I want it all

The other day, I heard the Queen song, *I want it all*, and have not been able to get it out of my head since. Sometimes I am so aware of my own mortality, of how short life is, and of how much there is to feel and do and experience before it's *game over*, that it is difficult to be patient. I want it all, and I want it *now*! As Freddie Mercury might have told you, tomorrow is too late, *for tomorrow, we die*! This is not a rehearsal, this is the final performance, and it will be over before we know it.

One of my friends has complained that I live my life at the speed of

light, but to me, it sometimes feels as though everyone else is standing still, letting life slip through their fingers unlived. I am greedy for life, for love, for passion, and for knowledge, and my time feels too precious to me to fritter away in the name of politeness. If I don't want to see a friend or answer an email message, I don't. If I thought that I would live for ever, things would be very different (and I'd probably upset fewer friends with my impatience and what they perhaps see as my "selfishness"!) but they are not different.

So when I see a woman friend of mine impatient for intimacy, wanting her man to take control and do it *now*, wanting him to take a leap of faith and dare to accept the authority she is offering him, wanting real dominance and discipline and wanting it harder, more extremely, more, more, more, wanting him to take the risk of trusting her totally, wanting him to have the courage to go onward into love and life, I understand. And when I see a man I know wanting a woman so much that he is going out of his mind with desire and love for her, wanting it all, and wanting it *now*, and sometimes pushing her so much he overwhelms her, I understand.

But we have to remember that other people, including those closest to us, are not us. They are separate individuals. They have their own wishes, their own preferences, their own needs, and their own concerns. Ultimately, we all need to control our own lives. This includes the man you women so desperately wish would take the reins of your rela-

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tionship, and it includes the woman you men wish would hurry up and take everything you are offering.

Pushing them won't help, it will only drive them away. I know, because I've been there too. You can only move as fast as you can move. No matter how much you might want to be able to go faster, love more, give more, understand more, be more be more obedient, or more in control, you can't effect these changes by an act of will. It takes time and creativity, and it is not something that can be done by someone else: you have to do it yourself.

It may seem obvious to you that your lover should change, and how, and when (now!) but beware self-evident truths, for they are often false. You do not know everything that is in your lover's mind, you can only ever know a small fraction of it, and you can only know a small fraction of the considerations your lover has. So when you think you know best how your lover should conduct his life, remember that maybe you don't actually know best at all. It is his life, not yours, and he must live it as he himself thinks best. He can only live it as he thinks best.

Yes, I know. How he lives his life affects you, so your pushing is not about getting him to change his life, it is about getting him to change just that part of his life which affects you. It's about give and take, it's about getting your legitimate and reasonable needs met, it's about being in this together rather than two separate, unconnected lives. If you may not give voice to your thoughts or ask for what you want, just what

kind of relationship is it anyway? Can it even be called a relationship at all? Aren't you supposed to be a team? How can it be you and him against the world if he is dragging his feet? If he loved you, he would want to meet your needs. He'd find a way to give you the control you want. He would understand your need for discipline and consistency and deep conversations and little romantic gestures.

Maybe he would; maybe he wouldn't; but what about *his* wishes? What about *his* needs? Do you think that he is wilfully failing to meet your needs out of spite? Do you think he is failing to take you in hand because he wants to make you unhappy? Do you know what this feels like to him? Consider the sort of things people often say:

- "I *need* him to take me in hand and he's just not doing it."
- "If you'd just put yourself totally in my hands and obey me..."
- "If you loved me you would want to spend more time with me."
- "Why can't you be more like Blush's Gary?"
- "This has got to change [or else!]"

What it feels like is a lack of acceptance. Have you ever suffered the pain of a lack of acceptance by someone you love or care about? If so, you will sympathise with the person who wrote:*

* See:
<<https://web.archive.org/web/20130128020041/http://www.takeninhan->

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My relationship went sour because my woman decided that things were always my fault. There's no way to live with someone who's decided they are perfection and you are scum.

How true. In her article, "In praise of *Fascinating Womanhood*," Charlotte said that one of the things that book has taught her is to look at life and problems with a positive attitude:

I've found that simply seeing my husband in a different light has made a whole lot of difference in our relationship. When I started reading this book, it was to fix our marriage (and that means my husband). It turned out that what needed fixing was me and my negative attitude. I can now see how that was spoiling everything.

I too like this aspect of *Fascinating Womanhood*. It is a fact that if you keep thinking about all the ways in which your nearest and dearest fail to live up to your expectations, instead of accepting them as they are, you are much more likely to feel miserable. If you can't accept those you love as they are, and they do not want to change, it may be time to move on. Spending years trying to change a person is a recipe for unhappiness for both of you.

Sometimes, when you are in this sort of situation, you can't see the wood for the trees. You see only your own unfulfilled needs, and fail to see how painful it is for the person you love to be on the receiving end of the lack of acceptance that your unfulfilled needs represent.

You feel like a victim, so your spouse must be responsible, and jolly well ought to change to meet your needs. Your needs are a tacit demand that your spouse be a certain way (whether he wants to or not) and do certain things (whether he wants to or not). Only then will your spouse become acceptable to you. Until then, your spouse is hurting you, wronging you, victimizing you—whether he wants to or not.

Think of it from the other person's point of view. How does it feel to be on the receiving end of your partner's unfulfilled needs? How does it feel to be held responsible for the unhappiness of someone you love, when you want more than anything in the world for that person to be happy? How does it feel to be accused of not caring, when you care very deeply? How does it feel when the one you love makes it perfectly clear that you are unacceptable and will have to become a completely different person or suffer their wrath for ever? It's enough to make a grown man cry. That's how it feels.

I was once hauled over the coals for absent-mindedly wandering ahead instead of waiting for the man I was with, when we were visiting an art gallery. Even after I had explained that it was not a slight, just absent-mindedness, he felt angry and slighted for ages afterwards. No matter how many times I assured him that I would never want to slight him, he just could not stop feeling aggrieved. That was just the start. It got worse.

He had a whole list of things I do or don't do that are Unacceptable, and he insisted on telling me about

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them, repeatedly. And it didn't matter how tired I was, or what time of night it was, or how many hours we had been on the phone, he had to be allowed to tell me *then*. And when I could take it no more and told him that I *needed* to sleep (well three hours ought to be enough conversation for anyone, surely?!) he would accuse me of never giving him time to talk, or of trying to avoid difficult subjects. Ouch! He also accused me of not caring about him. I cared very much, so this accusation wounded me deeply. But all he could see was his own pain. He was so wrapped up in his own needs and wishes that he rode roughshod over mine, and worse, angrily blamed me for failing to meet all his needs.

In failing to be whom he wanted me to be, how he wanted me to be, do what he wanted me to do, and feel how he wanted me to feel, I was, he thought, wronging him. I was hurting him. I was being nasty to him. I bore the responsibility for his pain, he thought. He said he was in love with me, but it did not feel like love. Given that everything about me was so unacceptable to him, I think his love was little or nothing to do with me. He informed me that Things Would Have to Change. They did. I showed him the door. Without acceptance, there is nothing.¹⁰⁷

"FEELING THE DRAGON'S FIRE" (4 DECEMBER 2003)

I've been asked to tell you what happened on the night I was anticipating when I wrote this article: "I

fear I have awoken a sleeping dragon."

After writing that article, I found that I was more elated than afraid. There was fear, but I did not want to try to persuade him to take a different course from the one he had planned. When I knocked on my husband's study door that night, I was so nervous that my knees were shaking and small muscles in my legs were jumping. My husband said I looked pale, and asked if I wanted to postpone our appointment.

Seeing the love and concern in his face, and hearing him seek consent for what he was going to do, I felt almost overcome. Then I noticed he had said "postpone", not "cancel", and I felt like kissing him passionately in gratitude and love, but the mood was too grave for that to be appropriate. Nevertheless, at that moment, I felt like the luckiest woman alive. My husband was being both sensitive to my wishes, and strong at the same time. In answer to his question, I shook my head, and he stepped aside to allow me to enter.

The next thing that happened surprised me and, again, threw me into turmoil. My husband picked up the old school cane that had belonged to his father, and sat down in his armchair.

"Strip," he said, softly. "Take your clothes off."

If you have read my previous article, you will understand why this is not what I was expecting. I had let my husband down badly, and he was very cross with me. He had told me he was going to cane me, and from the way he had talked, I had

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been expecting it to be one hundred percent discipline, zero per cent sex. And now here I was, being told to take my clothes off while my husband watched, cane in hand. I did not know whether to be aroused or panicked. It felt very strange. For some reason, it reminded me of the film *True Lies*! I felt a jumble of confused emotions. I can't find the words to describe it adequately. I felt excited, and I felt embarrassed about feeling aroused, and ashamed and guilty about what I'd done, and I felt vulnerable, trusting, and afraid. Even though my husband has seen me naked countless times, I felt embarrassed when I was standing naked in front of him. He did not smile. He did not seem to look at me with desire in his eyes. He just looked.

The next thing that happened was that I started shivering, because my husband's study is cold!

So my husband jumped up, and said matter-of-factly, "All right, let's get this over with. Bend over the desk."

I bent over it, was initially startled by the coldness of it, and probably tensed up as a result. So when the first blow came, it was extraordinarily painful and I screamed.

My husband told me to relax, and put his hand on my bottom, stroking me, soothing me. But he had told me he would give me six of the best, and that is what he did. Had I not known that it would be six blows, I doubt I would have been able to submit. But because I knew, I was able to count them down, knowing that it would end soon. The pain was terrible... and yet, not terrible. It

is difficult to describe it. It was extremely painful, but it was not an unbearable type of pain. There are other types of pain that are far less intense but far less bearable. I cried out in pain with every blow, and by the penultimate one, I was crying freely. But he still gave me the sixth blow.

Then he threw the cane on the chair and pulled me up and held me in his arms, stroking my hair, kissing my head, whispering that he loves me. I felt so peaceful, so loved, so safe, somehow. I felt a deep sense that I belong to this man, that I am his, that I will never stop wanting him and loving him, and that he is my lord and master. Feeling me shivering, he took me to bed. At least, that's why he *said* he was taking me to bed...

We have now talked about everything, and we are both very happy about our new life together. We do view this as a new life—"a life of caning and kissing, discipline and bliss," as my husband put it.¹⁰⁸

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU WANT TO BE TAKEN IN HAND?!" (9 DECEMBER 2003)

Janet Hardy suggested* that if you are single and looking, it is worth trying to identify clearly exactly what you want. This sounds obvious, but actually, as I myself have found, it is not that easy to articulate, and even if you do write it down, misunderstandings are common. To illustrate this fact, read the

* "Where are all the strong men?" 26 September 2003.

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following paragraph in which I say what I'd like, and before reading further, jot down or preferably write in the comments at the foot of this page what you think I mean in practice. Ask your friends to write their own interpretations of this paragraph too. Then compare all the different responses.

I'd like to be taken in hand by a man who loves me. I'd like to be brought to submission by an even-tempered, kind, gentle, but firm man of good character. I'd like to be controlled by a lovingly dominant man who wants me to be happy. I'd like a more traditional relationship in which the man is the head of the household. I'd like it to be with a man so quietly confident that he is the head of our household, that he does not feel the need to bellow and bawl, or cut the connection by withdrawing into angry silence.

Now, for fun, write in the comments below specifically what you think I mean in practice, before reading on. Whether you are yourself looking for a partner or not, this will be a very enlightening exercise and useful to you and others, I think.

Part of the reason that different individuals will interpret the above paragraph in different ways is that it is not very specific. What do you mean by being taken in hand? What does it mean in practice to be brought to submission? Given that the word "control" usually means something very bad, as in "control freak", whatever do I mean by that? And when I say "dominant", do I mean that I want a man who will call me "slave" or "bitch"

and make me kneel naked on the floor in front of him while he watches TV, my mouth open to act as human toilet if he doesn't want to use the bathroom? Do I want him to issue commands, military officer style, and demand obedience to his every whim, no matter how onerous his whims may be? Do I want to be patronised and bossed about like a school child? Do I want BDSM scenes? Humiliation? Pain? To be spanked over the knee?

Different individuals, coming at this from different perspectives, with different ideas, will have different interpretations. So when seeking a new relationship, or trying to introduce these ideas in an existing one, how can you minimise potential misunderstandings?

It is well worth creating a document that states what you think you want. This document should be editable because, trust me, your first attempt at writing down precisely what you want will prove to be inadequate at best. You will want to improve it over time. This will increase your self-awareness and understanding, and that is bound to be useful. For fun, each time you do a major edit, you could save the document as a new version. That way you will be able to look back and see how your understanding of yourself and what you want has improved over time. You will probably laugh at your first draft when you look at it in a year's time. You may be interested in how your wants themselves evolve over time too.

But before you attempt to write such a document, first collect together in another document any

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ideas you read about that you like, excerpts from email messages that speak to you. In yet another document, gather any quotes, excerpts, etc., which you find yourself reacting against. These documents will tell you more about yourself. Continue adding to them over time, and every now and then, read the documents and notice whether you still feel the same about each item. You might well find that in a year's time, half the stuff in the document of quotes you hate should now be in the other document, and vice versa. You might also find that some of the quotes that spoke to you initially now leave you indifferent, and that some of what you liked now seems simplistic or lacking insight. Create a new version of each document, making any necessary changes, as and when you feel like it. Such documents could, in themselves, convey considerable information to the person to whom you want to communicate what you want.

Secondly, create a document in which you yourself write down what you want, perhaps as follows:

First, write a broad brush strokes picture of what you want, giving the general idea. Do you have fixed ideas of what you want, or do you want the relationship to be evolvable, with on-going exploration and experiments and a willingness to back-track in the event an idea turns out to have been a dud?

Do you want an old-fashioned, chivalrous, deeply respectful relationship in which there is high contrast between the sexes and in which the man is the head of your household? Or do you want daddy-girl

dynamics? Or do you want to be owned, collared, and the slave of a BDSM Dom? Or do you want a straight-forward (ha! It is never that!) DD arrangement with rules and spankings? Or do you want different things in different moods? Or different things when you are playing?

Next, get specific. What does this mean in practice? What will your man be doing? What tone of voice will he be using? How will he be addressing you? Write down quickly as many really specific examples as you can.

To make it more clear, next, write down what you don't want. This is worth doing because it will bring to light inconsistencies between your general picture of what you want, and your specific wishes. For example, in general, my impression of myself is that BDSM leaves me completely cold. But plenty of specific ideas I have could easily be considered BDSM scene ideas, even though they do not feel remotely like that to me.

If certain words evoke strong reactions from you, whether negative or positive, write those words down and describe the reaction each evokes, or at least write a list of words you hate. Does the word "sub" make you cringe? If your man were to say "I command you to..." would you find that rude and unacceptable, or would you experience it positively, like Petrucio's Kate did in the production of *The Taming of the Shrew* that I enthused about in this

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article? Whenever you notice a strong reaction to a particular word or tone of voice, add a note of it to your list.

Next, you could show your documents to selected friends and ask them to discuss your documents. This is bound to bring out many areas where clarification is needed, so will help you when you are editing it later.

Finally, consider submitting the document you have written yourself to *Taken In Hand*—I think such descriptions are absolutely fascinating and it would be interesting to read them. I think it is possible to learn a lot about what you want, by reading other people's ideas about what they themselves want, don't you? Oh, all right then, so I'm curious! :-)¹⁰⁹

"HOW IT FELT TO BE TAKEN IN HAND FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME" (10 DECEMBER 2003)

Being taken in hand is a phenomenal experience! I'm so astonished by what happened to me just now that I want to tell everyone about it! (It's okay, I'm not going to tell everyone. My mother wouldn't approve, for one.)

I am in a new-ish relationship, and have only recently told my boyfriend that I want to be taken in hand. Until about two hours ago, nothing much had happened. I'd started thinking that my fantasy that he would turn into a dominant man was indeed a fantasy, and that

it would only happen in the event of the miraculous intervention of a Higher Power. And as I'm probably not top of God's Christmas List right now, owing to my various failings, I've fast been losing hope. Some men have it, others don't. Maybe this one's a don't, I'd thought. He *has* spanked me—once—but it wasn't the experience I'd imagined it would be, and he hadn't done much else to make me think there was any potential.

To be honest, I'd started thinking that it might never happen. I'd been doubting whether even after reading an entire library of books on the subject, he would know how...

Add to that that it's that PMS time of the month, and I've been feeling one-down in this relationship, and it all came to a head two hours ago. Today started badly, with my PC crashing while I was writing a long email to Alan, and everything was going wrong all day. After being frustrated over the loss of the email, I was weepy and upset through the day, ending with me being distraught.

Alan was very tolerant and kind, calling to check on me several times today. But as he has just told me, when two hours ago he found me still crying and, if anything, more distraught than earlier today, he decided to do something different. He says that one thing his job has taught him is that if you try one line of communication and it fails, you have to try something else. Being nice and kind and supportive all day ~~hadn't~~ worked. I was not listening to what he was saying all day because of being upset, and he decided that

* "The Taming of the Shrew," 15 October 2003.

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it was time to take me in hand. Only one problem: we weren't together, we were speaking over the phone. Did that stop him? No way!

He got very firm and a little stern. I don't even really remember exactly what he said, but whatever he said was less important than the fact that he was really *taking me in hand*. I don't think even the hardest spanking would have done more. He took me in hand, and he did it verbally, just by being firm and setting me straight.

The effect was instantaneous: a warm flood of relaxation flowed over me. I felt suddenly very peaceful, and I even started feeling sexually excited. I was flying, floating on air, flabbergasted. All my problems and fears just kind of melted away. It felt so good. He was for real, not playacting, and I knew it.

I'm astonished by how easy it was for Alan to bring me back to normal from the distressed PMS-crazed woman I was. With just a few words, he made everything okay! More than okay! I was grinning from one end of town to the other!

When we discussed this just now, Alan said that he could see that I was getting out of hand and needed to be brought firmly back. He said he can see that I need this kind of control in my life. He said that if a few words have this kind of power, he won't hesitate to take me in hand whenever I need it, and sometimes whether I do or not. Then he warned me to expect a severe spanking when we see each other next.

But what gets me is that he took me in hand without laying a finger on me! He did it with just a few

words, over the telephone. This is a truly mind-blowing phenomenon. Think of the potential! This was such a great way to bring me back into line and make me happy. I recommend it!¹¹⁰

"IS YOUR NEW MAN DOMINANT, DOMINEERING, OR A DITHERING WIMP?" (12 DECEMBER 2003)

If you are in a new relationship, or have yet to find a man, and you want to be with a man who is lovingly dominant, you might like to consider the following advice:

1. Don't waste time with someone who does not appear to have potential. To avoid doing this, set yourself clear time frames and criteria by which to judge whether there is progress/potential. Don't spend a year coming to the conclusion that he is about as dominant as a frightened rabbit.
2. Be very careful you don't end up with someone domineering instead of dominant, or controlling instead of having the ability to control in a consensual way, or someone physically abusive instead of someone who takes you in hand.
3. Be very aware of how he responds to dissent on your part. If you feel genuinely unhappy about something, does he listen to your concerns? Does he make you feel heard? Does he in general appear willing to modify his decision in the light of your wishes, or does he seem spitefully intransigent?
4. How is his temper? If he has a bad temper, the red flags should be flying.

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5. Does he accuse you of being controlling? Danger!
6. Does he love you? If love has not blossomed yet, be very cautious about introducing him to the idea of dominance and discipline. Without love, what you will have are empty experiences devoid of the intimate connection we cherish. I think Gary was right when he said that love should come first.
7. While you are waiting for love to blossom, concentrate on getting to know your new man as thoroughly as possible. Find out everything you can about him. The more you know, the more information you have on which to judge whether he is one of the good guys, and whether he is also capable of learning dominance, and whether he is ever too prudish to put you over his knee. Do not rush this.
8. Determine whether you are generally compatible, whether your values are reasonably similar, whether your energy levels are similar, whether any strongly held ideas you have clash. Imagine that this man were paralysed from the neck down and unable to put you over his knee. Could you still love the person he is? Be sure your answer is yes before getting too involved.
9. Does he add to your life or detract from it?
10. Does he make you happy?
11. Is he intimately engaged with you, or emotionally distant and withholding? If the latter, run for the hills.
12. Is he reliable? Dependable? There for you in a crisis?
13. Can you be yourself with him, or do you feel a little uncomfortable with him? You need to be able to be yourself. He, too, needs to be able to be himself with you.
14. How does he treat other people in his life?
15. Only once you have determined that your new man is worthy of your love should you take a step towards submission. Do not rush this. Take your time. Be sure. If he is worth it, he will wait for you to go through this process.
16. How you introduce the ideas depends on what exactly you want and what kind of person he is. For some men, showing them Taken In Hand and backing off to let them read it and think about it in their own time, might be a good start. Others might prefer a quiet chat. Or to watch an old film depicting old-fashioned relationships and the odd spanking scene. Consider what your particular man might like, and do that.
17. Back off. Give him time and space to think. Do not harangue him!
18. When you detect on his part a step towards taking you in hand, be sure to appreciate it rather than complaining that it is not enough or otherwise belittling his efforts.
19. Don't expect him to be consistent. Don't make a fuss if he isn't. This should not be a big chore for him, it should be fun, or he won't want to continue.
20. Find out his background and whether or not you could be on the same page. If he wants a BDSM slave and you want a deferential head of the household, you might not be compatible. How adaptable are you both, and do you want to adapt?
21. Tell him how it makes you feel when he is dominant. Be sure to

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- let him know how much you enjoy it.
22. Never never never do or say anything to make him regret being dominant with you.
 23. Let him know that you understand that what you are asking is no small thing. Be sure he knows that you appreciate him.
 24. If you find yourself behaving badly to get him to discipline you, talk to him openly and honestly about that and tell him what you want more clearly. He just might not have realized what you were angling for.
 25. If your efforts fail and you decide to end your relationship and look for another, be sure that you learn from any mistakes you may have made in this relationship.¹¹¹

"WHY DOES BEING TAKEN IN HAND WORK?" (13 DECEMBER 2003)

I am wondering what some of you think the point of this whole way of life is? I know this is a weird question. I think I mean why does it work?

I have noticed the calming effects it has had on my marriage. We were spinning out of control for a long time, years in fact. We still loved each other, but we did not get along very well. There was a lot of resentment on both sides.

Now, things have changed dramatically. I find myself actually respecting him; more importantly I find him actually respecting himself. The more he asserts himself, the more I respect him and the more I desire him. Even if he asserts himself on the little things, when I know he is putting his foot down and making

a decision, and will not be moved, I gush. And I am not usually the gushing kind. My emotional responses are immediate and dramatic. I have never felt more in love, calm, centred, loved, safe or respected in my whole life.

Why? Why does it work? Will it last? Maybe you won't be able to answer why it works for me. But why does it work for you? How has it lasted?¹¹²

"HOW CAN YOU SUBMIT WHEN YOU FEEL <I>FRUSTRATED</I>?" (14 DECEMBER 2003)

How can I be submissive when my husband doesn't do what I need done?

We only discovered this kind of relationship a few months ago, and the change has been wonderful: we feel much more connected, and we're having terrific sex. A few days ago was the first time Paul ever spanked me when I really didn't want him to. I was just in a bad mood for no particular reason, and had one of my uncontrollable urges to throw things, and after throwing a few items down the stairs, I stomped past him, giving him a look that clearly said, "Don't you even think about spanking me—I am so not in the mood for it." But he followed me, and he didn't say much. He just pulled me against him and smacked my bottom with his hand over my thin pants. It wasn't a big deal as spankings go, and I've taken ten times worse without shedding a tear, but this time I just burst into tears and

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sobbed for about five minutes while he held me. Then we talked about stuff, and everything was resolved, and we felt close and happy.

In the past, this scenario would have ended very differently. He would try to talk me out of my frustration, and it would get worse. Then he would give up and go into his cave, and I would feel completely abandoned, and my anger would escalate with nowhere to go. I would yell and scream and say mean things to him, and he would withdraw further, and we would both feel sad and angry and disconnected all day. What I really needed all along was to cry it out and feel supported and loved.

So that was great. But here's the problem I'm facing today: He just doesn't do stuff I need him to do. I need him to do "R" so that I can do "S, T, U, and V." I'm stuck and I can't move on until he does this one thing. I ask nicely. He forgets about it. I write it down. He puts the paper aside and forgets about it. He has a million important things to do. I'm trying to be a sweet, submissive, happy, non-nagging wife. But damn it, I can't get on with my important stuff until he does this one thing. And I can't just do everything. I don't think being submissive means doing all the housework, all the yard work, all the maintenance, all the child care, all the business tasks, all the financial management, and so on, without any help, does it? When I try to do everything, I feel like a slave and a doormat, and I get very unhappy and stressed out, and it doesn't all get done anyway. My

frustration mounts, and I feel that he doesn't love me. Finally, I explode. And after the explosion, he takes five minutes, or maybe half an hour, to do that one small task. So the task gets done, but we're both unhappy.

I explain to him that he's actually training me to go ballistic when I need something done. Going ballistic works. Being nice and reasonable doesn't. Wouldn't it make more sense to reward me for being nice and reasonable? But this never seems to sink in. And now, I'm afraid I'm going to be ignored when I'm nice and reasonable, and punished when I go ballistic! Aaak!

I would really love to hear from men and/or women who have been on either side of this situation. How should I behave when I really need something done? Would any of you guys spank your wife if she screamed at you after asking you to do something sixteen times?

And please don't think Paul is some kind of deadbeat. He's a very important, very intelligent guy who's obsessed with his work. I admire him tremendously.

Submissive but frustrated...¹¹³

"NO HELPLESS HYSTERICAL HEROINES HERE!" (15 DECEMBER 2003)

When I was little, I loved watching old horror movies on TV.

However, there was one thing that always irritated me about the typical heroine: she was ridiculously helpless. She'd fall flat on her face, for instance, while running away from the monsters.

Every time.

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And instead of grabbing the gun, which sat temptingly on the floor right next to her, she'd lay there like a ninny, screaming her fool head off. "Get the gun!" I'd yell at the TV, but she'd be too terrified to do it.

Even if she rallied her wits by some miracle and did grab the gun, either she was too afraid to shoot it, or it would go off in the wrong direction.

The hero ultimately always had to save her, because she was too much of an idiot to do anything for herself.

This seemed rather insulting. I was female, but I knew that if I were in her position, I'd grab that gun in a second and shoot the bad guys dead. And I swore I'd never be stupid enough to fall down while running away.

Yet, when I hit adolescence, I began to get crushes on the heroes in these very same movies: they now seemed strong and dynamic. I found myself reacting instinctively to their strength, to their obvious maleness. Initially, I was deeply ashamed of this. Women's Lib was new and a very big deal and these emotions I felt were confusing. I wanted a man to take care of me in a basic and primitive way, but according to all the new thinking in this area, it seemed I wasn't supposed to feel this way at all.

I wasn't about to tell anyone about this, of course, so I buried it deep down.

When I began dating, I made sure I chose only boys or men I thought I could control. I wasn't aware I was doing this; I thought I was dating them because they were cute or nice.

But now I look back and I can see that's exactly what I was doing.

The problem was, once I began to desire them, I opened up and revealed the part of me that naturally wanted to be feminine and submissive. Wanted to have them call the shots, to make the major decisions, to step up and be the man, to provide for me and protect me.

The kind of guys I chose didn't seem to be able to understand this apparent about-face on my part. Or maybe it was my lack of ability in communicating what I wanted. After all, if I couldn't even admit to myself what I really wanted, how in the world was I going to get it across to them?

I tried instinctively in every way I knew. I would tease them, make them chase me, ask them to pretend-rape me, hold me down. I would deliberately pick a verbal fight with them and then be completely outrageous in my behavior, hoping secretly that they would finally become so outraged at my insubordination, that they'd throw me down and hold me, let me feel their superior strength, put their foot down, do something, anything, so I'd know they were strong enough to handle me.

Their reaction was confusion, frustration and finally, anger. I didn't want their anger, I wanted their domination. Finally, I stopped trying to get what I was only vaguely aware I needed and didn't have the words to express.

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Eventually I got married and it was an equal partnership all the way.

There was no head of the household; instead, there was a constant battle for that title.

In retrospect, I can see how I would torture my ex-husband by insisting he take charge, and the moment he did, undermine everything he did. Somewhere I've read that over 90 per cent of communication is through non-verbal cues and pheromones. Without saying it out loud, I made it clear that I didn't trust him.

And whether it was because I didn't try hard enough to trust him, or because he wasn't worthy of trust in the first place, eventually he became untrustworthy and non-protective of me and our children.

I left that marriage and it was very painful indeed. However, I was lucky, in that I met the man (who is now my husband) who saw through my strong womanpersona to my submissive yearnings, right at the beginning.

However, our marriage did not start out to be quite the fairy tale it should have been. Old habits die hard and I couldn't change completely overnight. Sometimes I'd submit, but sometimes I'd fight his assertiveness, because I was scared. Wanting to trust him but afraid. Afraid I'd lose myself.

I know I'm intelligent, I know I have valuable insight. I did not want to give that up. If I gave him complete control over me, gave him the right to discipline me should I need it, did that mean I had to give up my

own strength? My personal sense of who I am?

Would I now have to be the kind of woman I saw in the horror movies so long ago, a woman who was unable to pick up the damn gun that was right there in front of her and use it if she had to?

The answer was, no: I can safely stay myself and stay as strong as I am, but my husband can be stronger when I need him to be.

In our marriage, my husband is the head of our household, something I always longed for. But this does not mean I'm a doormat, or have no rights, or no power. It simply means that he's the CEO of the marriage and I'm the next-in-charge.

This does not mean he's a dictator, but a loving leader. And it doesn't mean I'm an idiot unable to take care herself: I'm a strong woman who looks up to her man and believes he will make the right decisions for the both of us.

My husband loves my intelligence and strong spirit. He enthusiastically encourages me to come to him with any and all thoughts, concerns, ideas, or requests I might have. At any time. Even when I disagree with him, he is not threatened by me. He is supremely secure in the sure knowledge that he has final say. As I am content and safe in knowing that my husband loves me above all else and has only our best interests at heart.¹¹⁴

**"THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DOMINANT
AND CONTROLLING" (16 DECEMBER
2003)**

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What is the difference between a dominant man and a controlling one?

Women vary in terms of what characteristics they consider important, but most are happiest with a dominant man who is capable of stepping up to the plate and putting an abrupt stop to relationship downward spirals. Angry withdrawal and resentment is no fun, and it builds on itself.

But what is the difference between a dominant man and a controlling one? I think the difference is in whether or not the man cares about consent.

Some say that women's lib has caused a rift in the man-woman connection but I disagree. One of the things we should thank feminism for is that women are now able to give or deny consent for the man's involvement. This consent is a powerful connecting force and simply did not happen on a real level before.

In the past, in early agrarian society when families were generally well connected, large and so forth, it might be argued that consent was not necessary. But we have moved away from that, for better or worse, and now, women can choose to offer consent to a man as head of their household. This consent is much more powerful than the absence of consent, and it can be specific to the relationship instead of the "old way" of relying on social convention and the dogma of others.

The difference between a truly dominant man and a controlling one is that the dominant man needs and wants consent, whereas the control-

ling man doesn't even understand what this word means.¹¹⁵

"I WANT... TO BE POSSESSED" (17 DECEMBER 2003)

I am yours. You have the right of possession. You have the authority to stop me seeing anyone you don't want me to see, whether another man or single girlfriends who might encourage me to take a walk on the wild side. You have the right to tell me to ask you permission before going anywhere or seeing anyone. You have the right to meet or speak to people I see. You have the right to make whatever conditions you think fit.

When I was visiting a friend, and she and I were going out one afternoon, her husband handed her her cell phone and said, "Don't forget your leash." He requires her to be contactable wherever she goes. You have the right to require that too. You have the right to tell me to let you know where I am going. You have the right to tell me to seek permission to go where I want to go. You have the right to say no.

If I ever forget my cell phone or otherwise fail to respect your authority, you have the right to require me to submit to a spanking that is so severe it makes me cry and scream and beg you to stop—a spanking I'd never want repeated.

I love you and I'd never really want to annoy you, but do I want your control to be real. So would you be prepared to give me a severe spanking now, to show me what I'll be in for if I get out of line? I hope

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this doesn't sound like a chore for you... it just really does it for me when I feel the reality of your authority. My spirits soar when my bottom's sore.

You have the right to check on me as much as you like. You have the right to ask me anything you like, and to expect honest answers. I do not mind you "interrogating" me—as my husband, you have the right to do so any time you wish.

I find it erotic to be possessed, caged, constrained, reined-in. I don't find it at all unpleasant. It makes me feel yours, safe, that you care, that we have a connection, and that you trust me. It makes me want to give you more pleasure than ever.

You have the right to tell me to dress modestly when I go out. If you wanted me to wear a chastity belt when I go out with the girls, I would. You have the right to tell me to wear a necklace or bracelet upon which you have had engraved our names, or even something like "This woman belongs to ..." or "I belong to ..."

You tell me these things to me in respectful tones—respectful but firm—respectful, never patronizing or angry. I obey. I am yours.¹¹⁶

"DEALING WITH A MAN WHO DOESN'T DO AS HE'S TOLD" (17 DECEMBER 2003)

There is a very interesting discussion on this thread,* about how to talk to men. In the article which in-

troduced the discussion, Melanie wrote:

He just doesn't do stuff I need him to do. I need him to do "R" so that I can do "S, T, U, and V." I'm stuck and I can't move on until he does this one thing. I ask nicely. He forgets about it. I write it down. He puts the paper aside and forgets about it. He has a million important things to do. I'm trying to be a sweet, submissive, happy, non-nagging wife. But damn it, I can't get on with my important stuff until he does this one thing. And I can't just do everything. I don't think being submissive means doing all the housework, all the yard work, all the maintenance, all the child care, all the business tasks, all the financial management, and so on, without any help, does it? When I try to do everything, I feel like a slave and a doormat, and I get very unhappy and stressed out, and it doesn't all get done anyway. My frustration mounts, and I feel that he doesn't love me. Finally, I explode.

To avoid going mad with frustration, if I were in this situation, I'd do the following:

Question the idea that you need him to do x before you can do y. Any time your happiness depends on someone else doing something they often don't do, you are going to be unhappy.

I think that people do not respond well to being reminded to do things. I hate it when people do that to me. I don't even like being asked to do something once, never mind over and over again! It makes me feel like a servant, slave, or recalcitrant child. Similarly, I personally couldn't stand feeling that I have to nag, or being

* "How can you submit when you feel <i>frustrated</i>?" 14 December 2003.

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expected to remind a man to do something. I would just not go there. It would make me feel like the man's mother or nagging wife. It would kill my desire for the man. No way! It is not going to happen.

Don't let yourself be put in that position! Solve the problem yourself instead. That will make you feel empowered and peaceful. For example, suppose you have been asking and asking your man to change the washer on one of the taps (faucets) because the dripping noise is really beginning to annoy you, and he hasn't done it.

For a start, I would only ever ask once, but anyway, if I were in this situation, what would I do? I'd most likely let my hypothetical husband know that I'd asked the rather nice man next door to come and do it for me. :-) Or I'd find an odd-job man to come and do it. Or I might take my hypothetical husband's tool box and attempt to work out how to do it myself (perhaps while my husband was waiting for his dinner or waiting to use the bathroom!). What I would never do would be to ask him again and again to do something—not ever! There has got to be a better way—a way which does not feel like nagging, would not be destructive, and would not leave you feeling like throwing things.

A book that you might possibly find helpful is Laura Doyle's *The Surrendered Wife*. She addresses the problem of doing too much, and advocates what she calls “self care” instead of trying to get your man to do what you think he should.

But the book I particularly recommend in this connection is *Getting Through To The Man You Love: The No-Nonsense, No-Nagging Guide For Women*, by Michele Weiner-Davis. In it, she presents “male-friendly” ways of solving precisely the sort of problem Melanie has raised. She suggests, amongst other things, that you stop nagging and start taking action. She talks about doing something different. Actually, there are all sorts of highly practical strategies and ideas in it. The title of the hardback was *A Woman's Guide To Changing Her Man—without his even knowing it* but it is really about changing yourself. It is very empowering, fun to read, and manages to be both sympathetic to the woman and absolutely not man-bashing. Well worth reading!¹¹⁷

Best of luck!

“WHAT EASY-TO-SAY WORD GIVES EVERY LOVER PLEASURE?” (18 DECEMBER 2003)

There is a word you can use that is highly likely to give your lover an enormous amount of pleasure. It is not a word that you are likely to have difficulty bringing yourself to say. It is not a word you could not say in front of the children or your grandmother. It is not a word that would offend anyone. What is it?

Yes, you've guessed it. The word that would give so much pleasure is your lover's own name—unless you say it in the heat of passion with your husband, of course. (I jest!)

I discovered this some years ago, when I found myself feeling unac-

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countably drawn to a man who was pursuing me. He was rather young (fourteen years younger than I) and quite fat. Eventually, I realised that I was drawn to him because he was such a nice, warm person, and in particular, because he used my name a lot. (The fact that he had flown literally halfway around the world to meet me was neither here nor there!)

Hearing my name made me feel warm and cosy and slightly excited. I felt that his full attention was on me, that he was really interested. Using people's names gives them a feeling of visibility. It makes them feel appreciated. Try spreading a little happiness around those you love: use their name. It is such an easy and harmless way to give people joy.¹¹⁸

"SPANKING IS THE LAST RESORT" (18 DECEMBER 2003)

There's a great deal of talk about spanking here—to the point where a casual observer might think spanking is the main focus.

For my husband and myself, spanking is the last resort.

If I have to push him that hard, go to such outrageous lengths of misbehavior in order to feel his control and strength to the extent of his getting physical with me, then he believes he must have let me down in some way. My husband goes out of his way on a continual basis to make sure I'm always feeling his strength and love, so I never feel the need to push him to the point of actually spanking me.

Much is said about the closeness after a spanking, and the sense of love. I can still get that incredible closeness and calm just from my husband taking me in hand in other, more subtle ways. For instance, when we're out in public and he needs me to calm down or pay attention to him, he puts his hand on my neck and talks very softly to me. That is enough not only to get me to really listen to him, but to turn me into mush inside as well.

He did this while we were shopping a few weeks ago for Thanksgiving. He likes to come with me when if we need to do a lot of shopping, so I don't have to lift and carry so many things alone. He enjoys taking care of me in this way and I certainly enjoy watching him grab most of the plastic bags as one and effortlessly flip them into his truck.

Whenever he does something like this that shows he's stronger than I am, I love it. It makes me feel so feminine. It accentuates the undeniable differences between him and me. It makes me feel even prouder to be with him and to once again so very grateful for his care.

Not to mention it just flat-out turns me on.

Anyway, we were shopping in the store, going up and down each aisle, making sure we didn't miss anything when I playfully threatened to spank him if he ever got out of hand with me. Although he knew I was only joking, his eyes widened and flashed at me and he said very quietly, "Don't even think about doing that, ever. I mean it, Amber." I just laughed, but then, a few minutes

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later, I swatted him once very lightly on his butt through his jeans.

I couldn't help it, I just had to test him. In hindsight, I guess I wanted to see if he meant it or not.

Immediately, he put his hand very gently on my neck, pulled me close to him rather abruptly and whispered in my ear that if I ever did such a thing again, ever, I would get a very hard spanking when we got home. He went on to say that this was only a warning, but a severe one.

As far as anyone knew around us, he was telling me a secret, not correcting me, so I wasn't embarrassed, but I did get the point. The hand on my neck, the quiet but authoritative way he spoke to me, and the look in his eyes was enough to show me that he was truly in control and worthy of my trust.

I felt safe, reassured and content.

I wonder, in time, if perhaps it won't be enough for him to be just verbal and I'll begin to need him to spank me more? Because there are so many people who write about needing it and wanting it, and yet, fearing it too. I don't feel this in general, although I can understand it on an erotic level, because our sex life is filled with my give and his take, and possession and yielding.

The truth is, I don't like pain and I never will. I don't do this because I desire spankings or punishment. On the contrary, I want to be loved and cherished like never before.¹¹⁹

"HOW I MET MY HUSBAND, AND HOW THAT IMPACTED MY LIFE" (19 DECEMBER 2003)

I was 17, was going to be 18 in a couple months. Left at college knowing one person, someone I had corresponded with for about a year, from meeting him at an FFA convention.

Through this person I met Rob.

During this time, was leaving my books and things at his room, because it was closer to all my classes... go figure... fate.

So he went off to go do something, told me not to go out unless I asked for an escort from a roomie. They had three rooms connected together, So I had to go through one room to get to the hall. The gent across the hall was a black belt, and he was more than willing to walk me anywhere I wanted to go.

Side note, I am 5'5" and I weighed 108lbs. back in 1981 :chuckle:

I got a bit sassy and mischievous and asked him, "Oh yeah what would happen if I, say, went up to the library by myself?" Very calm and cool he said, "I'll put you over my knee and spank you."

The reason? There was a serial rapist on campus at the time.

He also had told me he was very serious about following through, but I didn't believe him.

Well antsy me... decided I could walk the four blocks up the hill to the library, was there a few hours... and walked back. Thankfully for me I was ok. Until I got back to his dorm room that is. I did my studying and set the books on the desk,

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was watching TV when he finally got back. He saw the books, knew I had been out, went out and asked the roommate if I had asked to be walked up the hill. Of course the answer was no.

So you guessed it, he was serious, it was over the pants, very chaste... but I never forgot how it impacted my life!¹²⁰

"WHY BEING TAKEN IN HAND HELPS" (20 DECEMBER 2003)

I am naturally submissive to my husband in the bedroom, as he naturally is dominant. This is an expression of our sexual selves. No problem—he gets turned on, I get turned on, everybody's hot and happy.

He also is head of household in a traditional way. He handles finances and has final say in anything he would care to have final say about! He takes care of me. He leads the household for the benefit of myself and my children.

Sometimes I get frustrated simply because it isn't always easy to not be in charge! Sometimes it just happens out of the blue, and I think "this stinks!" And I cop an attitude because things aren't going precisely my way. That's when a DD-type spanking really helps. *I think* some of the reasons it helps include:

1. Endorphins are relaxing. It's hard to be pissy when your brain is flooded with endorphins.

2. Most of us really like getting spanked, if not during, then after! It's often erotic, even when it hurts like hell. It's hard to be pissy when you're excited!

3. It restores us to our rightful place, looking up to our masterful mates. Whatever it is in our psyches that needs a strong, disciplining man, it's satisfied in a direct and primitive way by being "taken in hand." It's hard to be pissy when you are looking up to your strong man from his (literal and/or figurative) feet.

4. We get some powerful attention, and if feeling neglected, misunderstood, or otherwise thwarted was part of the bad behavior/state, then a good spanking and some hugs and some deep talk is very healing. It's hard to be pissy when you are feeling exquisitely understood.¹²¹

"DO YOU HAVE A COMMANDING PRESENCE?" (21 DECEMBER 2003)

I have a commanding presence. I am calm and rational and good at determining what needs to be done and getting it done. People do what I tell them. In a crisis, people look to me for guidance and courage. Several people in a number of different crises have said that being in my presence is soothing and my strength comforting. I have noticed that even the most independent, professionally effective, assertive men and women have become submissive to me in crisis situations. When I have asked them about this, they have said that I make them feel safe and more serene, that when they stay close to me, they feel that everything will be okay, and in one case, that she had found herself wanting to do as I tell her.

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The first time someone told me I have a commanding presence, I felt mildly insulted. I am not a controlling person and I do not seek to get my own way at the expense of others. I may be quietly confident but I have no military aspirations, and I have never wanted to join the police force or any other organisation with a hierarchical command structure.

Recently, a friend of mine told me that he wants to be more assertive with his girlfriend but that he simply doesn't know how. He asked me how to be more dominant, how to have a commanding presence, and why he doesn't. It's true: he doesn't; but why? He doesn't seem to have authority and something about him is such that he does not command respect, let alone obedience.

He seems full of confidence, which is supposed to be one of the main things that determines whether or not you have a commanding presence. Perhaps his confidence is just a little too brash and loud, a little too overt, a little too showy to feel solid. Sometimes quieter confidence can feel more real, more reliable, more calm, more controlled.

When I was at school, one of my teachers had complete control of the class at all times. He never raised his voice; he always spoke respectfully; he never punished anyone. He had a commanding presence. Another teacher was always punishing us, always shouting and always used sharp tones, ordering us about as though we were in the military. He had no control of the class at all.

If you are a man who wants to step into a more dominant role in your relationship, instead of using sharp,

military order style commands, think quiet confidence, and keep your tone respectful. You should not need to shout. Your woman should be able to sense your control without you having to make a big show of it. Slow down. Think before you speak. Consider how you move. Videotape yourself. Do you move slowly and confidently like a lion, or do you flutter about like a nervous bird? Relax. Slow down.

How's your temper? A bad temper indicates weakness, a lack of self-control, a lack of confidence. You can't have a commanding presence if you have a bad temper, you can only be a domineering bully. Learn some self-control. Stop being defensive. Feeling threatened by dissent is a weakness, not a sign of strength. Face the fact that you are a fallible human being who sometimes makes mistakes. Do not fear to admit that you have been wrong; that is a sign of weakness. You cannot maintain a healthy dominant position in the face of these weaknesses, so if they apply to you, start working on yourself now. Create goals for yourself and move forward step-by-step.

As well as being quietly confident, respectful, and having enough self-control not to lose your temper, you need to be honest and trustworthy. Without that, you will never have a good relationship, and you will certainly never be worthy of the respect and submission you might desire.

As you develop your dominance, you need to bend over backwards to be fair and consistent. As the person in charge, you have a lot of responsibility for the happiness of your partner and for the health of your

relationship. Take your responsibility seriously. Arbitrary punishment feels unfair and will lose you respect.

Take things slowly. Be prepared to back-track in the event that something you try turns out to be problematic. Expect to make mistakes. Expect to have to make changes. Keep your ego out of it. Treat it as an exciting and fun adventure rather than a test of your manhood. Accept yourself as you are, and move forward from where you are. Until you accept yourself, no one else will, and you will not have the control you want. You can't fake a commanding presence, you can only move towards having that, and you can only do so through thought and effort and with the time and the will and the creativity to improve.

One more thing: keep talking to the woman you love. She most likely has more belief in you than you do, and if she is reading *Taken In Hand*, she is undoubtedly behind you all the way, wanting this to work, wanting to please you. Look into her eyes and see the love for you reflected there. Look into her heart and see how willing she is to submit, despite your imperfections. Bask in her admiration and appreciation. Notice how happy and peaceful even the smallest sign of your dominance makes her. Notice how it increases her libido and heats up your sex life. You don't have to be perfect, you don't have to stressfully boss her about, you don't have to bellow: just be yourself, and allow her to feel your authority in small ways.¹²²

"MAKING IT EXPLICIT VERSUS KEEPING IT IMPLICIT" (22 DECEMBER 2003)

I have recently become involved with a woman who enjoys having a strong man in her life—someone who will treat her with respect, yet not be afraid to provide (and enforce) boundaries where they are needed. Knowing that she would not be happy with a man who could not do this, she was brave enough to tell me upfront what it was she was looking for. As a result, I found myself looking at my role in a relationship in a different light. Previously, rather than explicitly define expectations, I simply acted the way that felt natural to me in a relationship. Some women reacted favourably; others did not.

With hindsight, I realise that I was always a bit dominant. At no time did I take my partners in hand (something I now regret—the perils of cultural conditioning, you know)—I just acted according to my own internal rules, as felt proper to me at the time (protective and respectful, yet in charge; always keeping my given word, etc.). But my current partner has explicit ideas about what she wants, and this has made me do a lot of thinking. This focus on what my partner is looking for has allowed me to examine what it is I myself want, and why previous relationships ultimately felt unfulfilled.

It dawned on me that in any relationship where there is not a clear understanding of what each partner wants, we are, at best, groping in the dark. While that can be fun in its

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own right, if what you want is unconventional, you are less likely to get it if you are not clear about it. Being honest with ourselves (and also our partners) can have enormous benefits. For a start, once you start making what you want explicit, that gets you and your partner thinking and talking about it. That opens the lines of communication and increases the level of intimacy you share. Another thing we've found (we are still in the early stages of exploring!) is that talking about what we want helps us get a better understanding of exactly what we like and don't like. It also helps us explore our likes and dislikes more fully. Once you state a want explicitly, you and your partner can then think about it and discuss it, go further into it and decide it's not for you after all. Or maybe you'll find that it's just the tip of the iceberg and there's a whole new world to explore in that direction.

Talking about what you want is not without risks of course—but if you do not feel able to take risks with the person you are sharing your life with, with whom will you take those risks? Nobody? You only get one life—do not waste a day of it. (Errm. Unless you believe in reincarnation, that is. In which case, you probably have quite a few lifetimes to play with and get lots of practice in. Ouch.)

One risk of making things explicit is that you might define fixed unchangeable roles that you will eventually find restricting and boring. So it's important to stay aware of this risk and avoid getting stuck in a rigid role that won't bring you long-

term fulfilment. It's a balancing act between making things explicit and keeping your relationship moving forward. Keep talking, but keep your relationship dynamic too.

Of course, all the above sounds easy till you try to put it into practice. In practice, it's sometimes not so easy to state what you want, and people change their minds too. You have to factor that into the equation. And the fact that there are whole threads on Taken In Hand about how to tell your partner reveals how nervous many people feel about talking about this. What is equally revealing is that most of these articles seem to be based on the woman telling her man. Do not forget the man however: when all is said and done, if he misinterprets the signs from a woman, he could easily end up on an assault charge.

This brings us to the key point about making things explicit versus keeping it implicit. For a relationship to be anything other than abusive, genuine consent must be given freely. Consent is less clear in a relationship in which one person is dominant but this has not been discussed explicitly. So women wanting a man to take them in hand would be well advised to be explicit in giving their consent, to avoid a situation in which their partner fears to act because he is unsure he has consent.

It may sound odd to some, but to me it is important that whilst the man and the woman are not the same, and the man is the head of the household, they are still equal partners in the relationship. I like femi-

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nine women—but both partners are of equal value and of equal importance within the relationship. If they are not equal, how could there be proper consent? Consent must be freely given. Similarly, partners must both be equally able to withdraw their consent at a later date, if they decide that the relationship is not for them.

Becoming more explicit about what you want can help in forming a stable, respectful relationship. It can also be fun, sexy, and very interesting! Try it: you might find you learn a lot about yourself.¹²³

"I WANT..." (23 DECEMBER 2003)

I want... respect
I want... to submit
I want... to be feminine
I want... to be loved
I want... to be tamed
I want... to be cared for
I want... to be controlled
I want... to be constrained
I want... to be reined-in
I want... to be taken in hand
I want... to be taken
I want... to be with a man for longer than two dates¹²⁴

"SAFE" (24 DECEMBER 2003)

Susie has said that she would prefer to be with a dominant man who did not spank her, rather than a non-dominant one who did. It sparked a memory.

I remember early on, with Annie, when we were finding "likes and limits".

It was a very intense scene

She had her eyes closed
and was in that "special place"
I circled her
Then stood over her face
Thinking of what...if any...
To say to her
I lowered myself to her
Brought my face to her ear
and whispered....
"You are safe..."
Her face went slack
and she burst into tears
They were tears of
Joy!
That is why...
They want to feel
Safe¹²⁵

"A LOVE LETTER" (27 DECEMBER 2003)

My dear, did you think I did not have high expectations? Let me tell you what I was looking for in a man, and I will let you judge the level of expectations along with the ladies of the group as to how high I was on a scale of one to ten.

First there was truthfulness. I looked for and found that. He had to have the genuine thing which meant he looked into the mirror and could commit to a life of honesty which meant a life according to his deepest values lived each day demonstrated through his interactions with others.

Second I looked for and found humility. I saw a man who lives close to the earth and recognizes our connection to it and how our very survival depends upon our respecting it. I saw a man who passed credit for accomplishments on to his teammates, his fellow employees and coworkers or family members. I

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saw a man who most times chose to think well of others rather than not.

Third I saw a man who respected confidentiality that excluded even me. A list member, well known here in the past, had assumed you had shared her story with me that she had asked you to keep private. She was quite amazed to find you had not, and notably impressed.

Fourth I found wisdom. Wisdom grown out of experience and based in intelligent thought. I really liked that, and it was deeply important to me.

Fifth is flexibility. You are so adaptable and willing to try most things without too much fuss at least for a short while. You like most things and eat most foods, even vegetables.

Sixth is generosity. You are the most generous man I know and will share most all of what you have with those who need or want it, I have noticed this about you.

Seventh is one that most do not require and neither did I really and most likely should not be included in this list, but it was a nice bonus about you... originality. You are most original in your thought and it has been such a delightful experience for me that I simply cannot write this without mentioning it. There are other things like passion and idealism, and sweetness. You were sweet when you brought me tulips after a spanking that one April day. I will never forget that.

Eighth is you accepted my consent for our relationship and in turn gave me yours...

And last... you knew how to spell license two ways, which showed

you had the sillies, and I most certainly had to have those.

Now is this a woman with low expectations?¹²⁶

"GIVE NEW LOVE A CHANCE" (28 DECEMBER 2003)

When you lose someone with whom you have had the relationship of your dreams, it is natural to spend a lot of time thinking about the person you have lost and what you had together. But when you enter a new relationship, it is important to turn your attention to what you have now in this new relationship. If instead you live in the past, you might not be giving your new relationship a chance to grow and develop. Few are strong enough to compete with the ghosts of past loves.

Sha expresses this truth much more poetically, saying to those in this situation:

Picture yourself. You represent life and what you want your will to live. You are on a mountain top. The mountain represents the love you have lost and the strength he showed you.

The mountain was so high that you felt safe from the world and untouchable by the world. Until one day the mountain slipped and you started falling. The falling represents the pain that you are in. As you fall you try reaching out for the mountain, trying to grab hold of some part of that great strong mountain, but the mountain is not there now. The more you fight, trying to get hold of it, the more pain you cause to yourself

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What you haven't realized is that you have a parachute. The parachute represents the submitting to your new love, and all you have to do is hold on to the parachute and float to the safety of another mountain which will be your new love as soon as you land there. But being away from the first mountain that made you so safe you are scared to trust anything and any one. The parachute has not been tested enough for you to trust it, but what you don't realize also is that you have tested it every day you have been together with your new love. So all you need to do is pull that rope the rope is hope and trust and let the parachute safely carry to that other mountain top that is just as safe and even as strong as the first one. I know that is scary too because you afraid that this mountain will shake and you will be falling again but you seriously can't keep falling forever. At the end of that fall is death and we do not want that.

The first mountain is gone now and you can't keep trying to hang on to it. You can keep the reminders of it, like when kids go on field trips and collect leaves and flowers and put them in a Memory Book. They take that book out once in a while and look at the leaves and things they collected and they remember what they learned on that trip that is a good thing. But they don't try to make their way in life based on that trip. You are on another field trip and this one could be better than the last. You have to give it a chance and explore the new mountain. Pull that rope and go to the other mountain

that is waiting for you with a great big landing area.¹²⁷

"HOW I TURNED THE FANTASY INTO REALITY" (29 DECEMBER 2003)

After the demise of my marriage (a long boring story) I was determined for my next relationship to be different. I realized that if my next relationship was to be a happy one then I needed to find a woman who desired domestic discipline. I started my search for a woman with this thought in mind. I was blessed to find such a woman and we have been living in a domestic discipline relationship for more than five years now.

The most difficult part of this journey was getting started. Entertaining a domestic discipline fantasy and living in such a relationship are not the same thing. Like many others, we went through a number of trials, starting and stopping domestic discipline several times in the first year before we both worked through the details. Any relationship is bound to have some trying moments and a domestic discipline one is no exception. We have arrived at a point in our relationship that we could not imagine living any other way. Since we were both interested in pursuing such a relationship perhaps our domestic discipline journey was somewhat easier than those who are trying to institute one after many years of marriage.

My major concern when first starting out was learning how and when to use discipline. It is one thing to fantasize about giving a disciplinary

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spanking, it is another matter to actually give one, especially to the woman I love. Erotic spanking was always easy, but a disciplinary spanking, which most women here want, was not so easy. What I learned over time was that my wife wanted me to be firm. She needed me to take charge and be the head of the household... not as a game or a role play, but for real. Intellectually, I understood this and wanted this, but finding the resources within myself and being bold enough to act took me a while to feel comfortable in that role.

My wife says I took to it like a duck to water lol, but I am not sure woman understand that in this current cultural climate claiming to be the head of the household is seen not only as anachronistic, but also abusive. What I came to learn was that being the head of the household was not so much about being like Father Knows Best, but rather a matter of truly understanding how my dominance/masculinity and her submission/femininity worked together to meet our individual needs.

Living together as husband and wife in a domestic discipline relationship has made us closer than I ever thought I could be with another person. The trust she has in me is truly humbling. To us this is not just about a man spanking a woman, but how we relate to each other on a daily basis. For us this is not (just) about me spanking my naughty wife (not that there is anything wrong with that lol) but rather is about how we connect as a man and a woman. Through domestic discipline we are

able to express and accept our true natures.

The benefits have been profound. Even after five years we still behave like newly weds. She feels secure and more feminine in knowing that I am in charge and I proudly, without shame or self-consciousness, am able to be true to my masculine nature. What a relief! I must also add that I have gained a loving and caring wife who spoils me rotten. Who would've ever thought that something so seemingly simple could have such profound impact on our union? Go figure....

We use very traditional disciplinary methods. Most typical are long over the knee spankings with a few small light weight paddles or my hand. We have experimented with several implements, but prefer these implements primarily because they do not leave the kind of marks and bruising other implements do. Sometimes, depending on the situation, I incorporate corner-time in the disciplinary sessions.

Ultimately, I think everyone entertaining this lifestyle should ask themselves how does this help us to become more connected and enhance intimacy. In spite of how it may seem to others, this is not about oppression or limiting my wife, instead it is about meeting needs and finding fulfillment in each other.¹²⁸

"THE HEALING POWER OF TAKING HER IN HAND" (31 DECEMBER 2003)

Looking back on my time with the woman I love, I'd have to say our discipline comes down to being ul-

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timately about changing the way we relate to each other. I think we all can *react* sometimes instead of *responding* the way in saner, calmer moments we would agree is more reasonable. However, we get used to a certain way of relating to an intimate partner, and that way is really easy to get back into if we don't make a conscious effort to change it. The effect of poor communication on a relationship will eventually erode the relationship.

Once, when I wasn't paying attention, I sat on my girlfriend's glasses and bent the frames. She said that these poor frames were bent beyond repair and she was trying to have me believe she would need to go through life blind from then on. The truth is that I did bend her glasses frame, a mistake of some carelessness, but after some time I did respond by stating (rather decisively I might add) that we were not going to continue to relate over such issues in this matter. She calmed down immediately. The glasses were eventually repaired free of charge at the local and very friendly Fred Meyer Optometrist.

Truth is, before this relationship, I likely would have been overpowered by a woman who was in such a state, would have had no real choice except to "fight back" or just leave. It is easy to see how this way of relating would diminish a relationship and diminish both individuals over time. I think, for us, that discipline isn't really about the guilt thing, the "making her a better person" (she's wonderful the way she is), and she really doesn't engage in individually harmful behavior. She certainly

would not even consider anything that would harm others.

We use discipline as our way of choosing how we're going to relate instead of allowing our random, often unconscious and sometimes harmful interactions to determine how we relate over time.¹²⁹

"IS THERE CONSENT?" (1 JANUARY 2004)

A wife is hit for the second time in a week by her husband, but when her best friend begs her to leave him, she refuses, saying that she loves her husband and that it is her fault that he is violent with her. Is there consent?

It depends what is going on in the mind of the wife. Is she torn between her compulsion to stay with her husband and her wish not to be abused? If so, in staying with her husband, she is acting against her will—against that part of her will that wants her not to be abused. In this case, whilst she might be deemed to be consenting in the legal sense of the term, she is certainly not consenting in any other sense, and her husband is acting immorally in hitting her.

Conversely, suppose this is a very happy marriage and the wife wholeheartedly prefers the spanking and wishes she could get through to her friend that this is not an abusive situation, this is her husband indulging her desire for a strong, dominant man who isn't afraid to take her in hand now and again. In this case, there is consent and the husband is not acting immorally.

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Here is another example:

A couple of lovers are walking along a deserted cliff in the moonlight. They are not speaking, but every now and then, they look at one another and smile. At one point, the man sweeps the woman off her feet literally, and makes love to her. Is there consent?

Again, there is not enough information to go on. There might be, or it there might not be. What is the woman's state of mind? Is she thrilled? Joyful? Happy about it? Or is she horrified? Or in an unpleasant state of turmoil? Does she wish that he had respected her request that he not do anything like that this week? Or is she glad about it?

The most useful sense of the word "consent" for our purposes is *moral/psychological* consent. Is this really what you want? Are you in conflict? Is that conflict real and distressing to you, or do you see it as an exciting adventure or exploration? Is it something you would *really* rather not have to endure, or is it actually something you welcome? If you could press a magic button that would instantly stop your husband taking you in hand, would you press it or not? In your heart of hearts, do you actually love what your husband does, or do you wish he did not take you in hand? Have you been longing for a man who would be firm with you and are you overjoyed to have found such a man—or do you long for the day when he will no longer take you in hand?

If you've been having trouble sleeping and you are getting worn out and under the weather, and your husband tells you not to drink coffee

after midday, do you find that irritating or controlling? Or if you are honest, do you find it thrilling? If you were single, would you look for a man who never says no, or would you look for another take-charge man? Do you prefer your man to wear the trousers, or is it something you merely put up with? If you were never taken in hand again, would you miss it or would you be glad? Is this what you really want, or something you tolerate?

Notice that whether or not there is consent in the relevant sense hinges on the state of mind of the person consenting. There are other senses of the word "consent" which are not so relevant here, for example, legal consent. It would be a disaster to use the same standard of consent for legal purposes. Legally, it makes sense to err on the side of assuming consent. If a woman goes along with a man's sexual advances, and he has not drugged her or threatened her, etc., the law has to assume that she is consenting. For legal purposes, she cannot reasonably claim rape if she does not at least try to convey her reluctant state of mind to the man. But for our purposes, that is too low a standard of consent.

An honourable man doesn't just want to stay on the right side of the law, he cares about real consent: he wants the reality to be that the woman he is with is genuinely, wholeheartedly, deeply wanting him to do what he is doing. If he thought that she was actually in the same state of mind as a battered wife, he would be appalled. For a decent man, it is not enough to have his wife's "blanket consent". Even if

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she has said that she gives him blanket consent, he wants to feel sure that she is truly consenting on an on-going basis. The man who gets his wife's agreement and then doesn't care how she feels thereafter is likely to violate consent and is unlikely to have a good relationship.

In my next article about consent, I talk about the psychology of consensual non-consent...¹³⁰

"SHE WANTS TO BE TAKEN IN HAND AGAINST HER WILL?!" (2 JANUARY 2004)

There is something worth discussing that is deeply consensual but appears for all the world to be non-consensual, and it is not easy to express in words in the English language without using the term "non-consent". Many in the DD community are adamant that they absolutely hate what they call "punishment spankings" and that there is absolutely no sexual element to them, and that they would do anything to avoid getting one.

They say all this, and I have no doubt that they are sincere, but they are clearly *not* in the same state of mind as a battered wife. They do actually prefer to be with a man who will do that, and not in the way that the abused wife 'prefers' not to leave her battering husband. The abused wife would most definitely wave the magic wand that would turn her abusive husband into a non-batterer; the DD wife would definitely *not* wave that magic wand to turn her husband into a man who would

never give her a 'punishment spanking'.

The states of mind are simply not the same. In the one case, there is no consent; in the other, there is. It may sound non-consensual, and one can understand why the casual reader might find it all rather alarming and horrifying, but as I have tried to show, it is actually consensual.

Given the limits of the English language, it is not unreasonable to describe this as "wanting non-consent" or "consensual coercion" or "consensual non-consent". But for those who can't even begin to understand why anyone would want this, let me explain more clearly what this is all about, and thereby show that this is not a sign of being screwed up. So, what is going on in the mind of a woman who "wants non-consent"?

For the sake of simplicity, I think of this in the following way (and I'd really appreciate feedback/criticism on this, BTW).

There is the core "me" that must be consenting on an on-going basis and absolutely not distressed, otherwise there is a risk of a psychological catastrophe. Think of this as the underlying reality, such that if the core "me" were not consenting, I'd be in the same terrible state of mind as the battered wife. I want to explore, learn, evolve; I want to forge new paths and discover new things, but that always involves psychological risk, and I want to avoid real non-consent like the plague, because real non-consent is real distress, and that can be very damaging, as we have established.

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Nevertheless, that is not the end of the matter, for there is something that draws even perfectly sane individuals to this thing I am calling “non-consent” but which is consensual. Why do so many seem drawn to explore these potentially risky psychological waters? Because such exploration, if successful, creates valuable new knowledge for that person. The exploration of ‘non-consent’ is (if all goes well) under the psychological control of the ‘non-consenting’ person. It is not psychologically infinite. It is circumscribed.

Think of it as being in just one part of your mind. That part of your mind might be not consenting, whilst the core you is enjoying what is happening in that part of your mind, a bit like you might enjoy a very scary film. Part of you has to be scared otherwise the film does not move you, but if the whole of you—or the core you—is scared, then you are overwhelmed with fear and thus distressed. The successful exploration of non-consent, like enjoying watching a scary film, is a rendering. In the one case, you have a rendering of non-consent; in the other, you have a rendering of being scared.

What do I mean by rendering (mental representation)?

Imagine your mind as a series of interconnecting thoughts, ideas, values, etc. Each thought you have is in a semantic context of other thoughts, standards, values, etc. The ideas are related to each other. In your mind, you could have a representation of and ideas about something. At this moment, I am thinking about drinking a cup of tea. In my

mind, I have a rendering of that happening, except that I am typing, not drinking, so I also have thoughts about wanting to stop typing and actually drink some tea.

Now I am drinking my tea and typing one-handed, and I have satisfied tea-drinking feelings in addition to the idea of drinking tea I had before. But note that what I have in my mind is only ever a rendering of tea drinking (a mental representation of tea drinking), never the actual thing, because I don't have any magical way of drinking tea directly with my mind, I drink it in the ordinary way, through my mouth and down my throat. The tea doesn't go anywhere near my mind, so my mind's experience of tea drinking is not direct but only ever a mental representation, a rendering.

However, drinking tea and merely thinking about drinking tea are two different experiences. Just as being coerced and merely thinking about being coerced are two different things, when I am actually drinking tea, the tea-drinking rendering in my mind is richer, more complex. My brain is receiving more information when I am actually drinking tea.

There are different levels (loosely speaking). In a sense, when you (1) *think about* being raped or spanked against your will, you have a low-level rendering of non-consent in your mind. In this case, if you are just thinking about it and have no particular problem thinking about it, you don't really experience the non-consent. It doesn't affect you noticeably.

You could, if you were of a mind to, get more into thinking about that

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daydream. You could think about it in more detail, (2) *imagine what the non-consent might feel like, think about more details of the experience, think about it as an experience*. This would be a higher-level or richer, more complex rendering of non-consent. Part of you would be in some sense 'experiencing' the non-consent. For some people, this would be enough to distress them. Even this would feel psychologically dangerous to them.

Similarly, some individuals can't watch films depicting violence without being distressed, whereas others can enjoy them. Those who can enjoy such films have the ability to engage with the rendered violence without being adversely affected at their core, as it were. It is not that most who enjoy violent films are "desensitised to violence": on the contrary, if they were, they would not enjoy such films, they would be bored by them or indifferent to them. Part of the enjoyment of the film is being interested in it, engaging with it, caring about the characters, wanting the good guys to prevail, and so on. You can only care about that if part of you fears that the bad guys might win, for example. That rendered fear or "being on the edge of your seat" is exciting.

Similarly, if you were, say, physically anaesthetised and drugged such that you were desensitised to pain and not really conscious, anything that might happen to you would not be having much effect psychologically at the time at all. That would not be exploring non-consent in the sense I refer to. So it is not that those who are drawn to

'exploring non-consent' are somehow desensitised. When you are exploring non-consent (for example, receiving a serious spanking 'against your will') part of your mind must be engaging with the non-consent, affected by it.

Another thing you could do would be to (3) *act out some approximation of your daydream of non-consent* with another person. This interactive version could be more circumscribed and pre-planned in detail, to reduce the psychological risk. Or it could be less planned, less circumscribed. This would increase the psychological risk and increase the complexity and richness of the rendering. That is to say, the less pre-planned and circumscribed the interaction, roughly speaking, the closer the approximation to 'the real thing'.

Some individuals at some times will not even want to *think* of being subjected to something against their will (perhaps if they have just been raped for real), but at other times, might be quite happy to engage in quite a realistically acted-out rendering of non-consent. Some individuals will be interested in only very circumscribed role-playing acting out of non-consent. They might well prefer a set time for this role play, and think of it as a 'scene', and have a safe-word. These are ways of reducing the psychological risk—of circumscribing the rendering so that it does not get out of hand and cause real distress in their core self, as it were.

Other individuals are actively exploring and engaging with the idea of non-consent, and for some of those individuals, the ways of cir-

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cumscribing the experience I have just mentioned would destroy the value of the exploration. For them, circumscribing it that much would make the experience empty and barren of knowledge-creating potential. They would not get much out of it. These individuals want to explore the idea more deeply. They want a richer, more complex, less circumscribed rendering.

It is quite possible to take the position that you would absolutely never willingly submit, even though you really want more than anything to be brought to submission by a strong man. Some women fight, run, lock doors, kick and scratch like a wildcat, or behave like real shrews, and yet, they can be bitterly disappointed if the man does not use force to make them submit.

In some cases, some individuals will want a much more realistic approximation to the real thing, and at some point, it seems not totally unreasonable to describe that as the person "wanting non-consent". In a sense they don't, in that if the rendering in their mind is out of control psychologically, they will be distressed and definitely not wanting it, *not* consenting. But if it remains circumscribed and under their control, then they might well be in a state which can be described as "wanting non-consent".

As to why individuals are interested in exploring non-consent, there could be many reasons, but what it boils down to is the pursuit of knowledge (in the broadest sense), psychological growth or improvement, increased psychological strength. It is not actually that peo-

ple want to suffer the distress of coercion: what they want (consciously or unconsciously) is to *learn* something. Engaging with non-consent is psychologically challenging, and when you survive and meet a challenge, you come out the other side stronger, more able to meet other challenges too. That is a powerfully satisfying feeling, and knowing that you can do this can enable you to remain rational in entirely unrelated difficult situations. This is useful in life. Amongst other things, it means that you are less likely to be upset by things.

Of course not everyone is interested in this, and some increase their strength in other ways, or are intellectually engaged in other spheres, and that is fine. But for those who are interested in this particular psychological exploration, it is valuable.

Suppose a woman has spent 20 years searching for a man who will administer serious discipline against her screams and protestations, and when she finally finds such a man, she willingly gives him blanket consent to be in control and to administer discipline if he thinks fit. Suppose that she finds that instead of being happy and peaceful, she feels distressed and unhappy. Then she is *not* consenting, and unless she is in the paralysed state of mind many battered women are in, she will seek to make changes or leave the man.

But if instead she feels happy and peaceful and loves the man passionately and would not change him for the world, I think we can safely say that she is consenting, even if she says that she hates being spanked. Saying that she hates it and even

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thinking that she hates it is all part of her rendering, and is fruitful psychologically. And as I have said before, for many women, it is not the spanking *per se* that they crave, it is the authority and control of the man, and one way that might be expressed is by force (such as discipline) on occasion.

I have been looking at this from the perspective of the person wanting to experience things 'against their will' but the person wanting to explore it from the other side is also on a quest for knowledge. Rendering non-consent is not just psychologically risky and potentially valuable for the person receiving it, the same is true for the person doing it too. I shall say more about this in a future article.¹³¹

"I DON'T WANT TO BE A SERVANT OR SLAVE" (3 JANUARY 2004)

In her article, "A need for control," Sharron mentioned three types of submission: obedience, service, and control. Let's get one thing straight. I don't want to be anyone's servant. (Is that why I'm still single?) Were I talking to a prospective suitor, I'd say the following:

Please don't treat me like a slave or expect me to treat you like a master. And if you start writing my name in lowercase or referring to me as your "sub", I shall be altogether unimpressed. That is just not my cup of tea.

Call me strange, but whilst I do want to please you, I don't have the slightest desire to call you "Master" or "Sir". Correction: I might on occa-

sion, of my own free will, call you "Sir" in the same spirit Elizabeth calls Mr Darcy "Sir" in *Pride and Prejudice*, but in that case I'd expect you to address me in turn every bit as respectfully. I will not call any man "Sir" or "Master" on command. But if you want to address me as "Madam" or "my lady" and make a little bow as you do so, feel free to do so. :-)

If you expect me to wait on you hand and foot, clip your toenails, or give you a full body massage twice a day, sorry, but you picked the wrong woman. But if you want to wait on *me* and give *me* a full body massage twice a day, etc., etc., etc., that would be delightful! Perhaps you would like to bathe me too? Oh, and feed me grapes while you're at it, there's a good chap.

If you wait for me to bow and scrape and grovel and hover around ready to receive your next order, you'll be waiting a long time. It's not going to happen. I don't want a master or a commanding officer or an employer, I want a relationship with a man, a lover, a friend, an equal. Yes, okay, I do want you to be the head of the household, but I don't envisage this as you being the employer of a household of servants or even the owner of a single slave.

You may be the master of the house, but for a happy, harmonious home, wield your power quietly, respectfully, and with consideration, like the polite teacher with the commanding presence. If you start barking orders at me, I am likely to rebel and tell you where to stick your orders. Whilst I must admit to having the odd fantasy about being

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taken in hand by a big muscular military man, I don't really want a commanding officer—not if that idea is used to turn me into an unappreciated servant anyway.

Don't even think about commanding me to do all the cooking and cleaning and to have breakfast, lunch and dinner on the table at such-and-such times every day, because if you insist on this, I will be miserable and feel oppressed. It is not that I don't want to cook and clean. I will do it, but I need either to have the freedom to do it my way (which might not be to your standards or on your timetable) or I need to be given vast amounts of appreciation for my efforts, or both. I may well serve out of love, but I do not love to serve in the sense of having the service kink. If you take the view that I must serve, that I owe you it, that you have a right to expect it of me, then I will not be happy to do it. Allow me to give these things freely rather than demanding them, and you may be pleasantly surprised.

If you start *expecting* me to do these things—or indeed to wash your clothes, iron your shirts, clean your shoes, or bake you fresh rolls every morning—and particularly if you get angry when I don't do these things—I am likely to feel taken for granted and treated like a servant and then I won't want to do anything for you. If, on the other hand, you do not *expect* such service, you are very likely to get it, particularly if you notice and appreciate it when I do these things. A little appreciation can make all the difference!

I do enjoy giving things and service to those I love, but I react

against being told that I *must* do these things to demonstrate respect. Respect is not something that can be commanded, it has to be earned. The only thing one can give on command is the semblance of respect, the form of respectfulness. Don't get me wrong, I think that respectfulness is important, but that goes both ways, and to me, it seems disrespectful to treat your lover like a servant unless she likes that.¹³²

"THE APPEAL OF A VERY FEMININE WOMAN" (7 JANUARY 2004)

Very feminine women—both in looks and in nature—really turn me on. I love a woman who oozes femininity in her manner, the way she looks at me, the way she moves, the way she talks. I love the way a feminine woman will look up at me from under her eyelashes with an innocent, softly submissive, shy, blushing expression.

I love a woman who makes the effort to dress femininely. It doesn't have to be skirts all the time—jeans can be feminine too, as anyone who enjoys spanking a nice bottom will tell you. But I love stockings and nice underwear—well I'm a man, what can I say?!

To know that my girlfriend, J, bears in mind what I like when she chooses how to dress really makes me feel good. I don't lay down rules about dress, but J does wear clothes she knows I will like, and I find that pleasing and even erotic. She does it for me, because she loves me and she's mine. How could any man not enjoy that?¹³³

"THE PARADOX OF THE STRONG AND SUBMISSIVE WOMAN" (8 JANUARY 2004)

Let me just start by saying that as a man who has, over the past couple of years, truly come into his own, it's a real pleasure for me to see men like Random, Howard Frank, Gary and Dan (of Dan and Amber) whose nature as a dominant partner ties in directly to their nature as a gentleman and, truthfully, as a masculine nurturer. We are truly blessed to have the partners that we do, and they in turn are blessed to have men like us in their lives (I am no believer in false modesty—it's just a part of my appalling American streak). Not that I in any way believe that all relationships should be like ours. I have to admit that I grit my teeth when I read things like "The male is naturally the dominant partner, while the female is naturally submissive," then laugh to think what my wonderful dominant female friends would say to this (and how they might react if they had a paddle in their hands at the time...). It is not that "This is the one truly right way to live and love", it's simply that it is so important to understand and be honest about one's own nature and to find a partner who complements you in her own nature, needs and desires.

For me this is one of the essential paradoxes at play in my relationship, and in all successful relationships I have had—and I use paradox in the truest sense of something that appears to be a contradiction, but is actually a deeper form of truth than we can usually express.

The nature of this particular paradox is this: That it is in my partner's nature to be a strong, independent and, at times, even commanding force in much of her life, while also having a genuinely and lovingly submissive side that she chooses to share with a trusted partner. It is not that the strong, independent, commanding side of her is an act, a way of "being tough" for the outside world—it is who she is and neither she nor I would ever choose to change it.

Both sides of her are equally "her" and each one feeds the other—the strong, independent side helps her to grow and explore and to protect herself in a world that is by no means always benevolent or benign. But her submissive side, the part of her that will always be a young girl—playful, loving and constantly reassured by having a stronger, guardian force there to nurture and guide her—helps to give the womanly, independent side strength.

Human nature being what it is, although I believe we have these polarities "hard-wired" into us, we are not designed to be able to meet all of our own needs. However independent any of us may be, we are truly social animals, and it is important to honor and respect that. By nurturing and encouraging both sides of my beloved M (the sides of her that is "My lady" and the side that is "My girl") I help make both stronger.

Now how does this play out for me? Do I have exactly the same needs? Not quite. I certainly do have a vulnerable side (as does every human being with a soul), but his

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needs are not exactly the same as M's. I love being taken care of when it is a gift from my beloved or my friends and family. I love being able to let go with those I most deeply trust and admire, to allow myself to be a well-taken-care-of child at times so that I can be even more fully the man that I am the rest of the time.

But—and you will see this is in actual children—not everyone's (please forgive the cliché) “inner child” is the same. No children respond well to abuse, but I do believe that some respond well to a more hands-on, dominant style of parenting than others. Although no children really love the actual moment of being spanked by their parents, some respond very well to knowing that there is a very firm hand to guide and discipline them whenever they stumble and fall. For these children, I believe that lovingly given spankings of the firm-but-not-harsh variety, and that are preceded and followed by much parental love and affection are truly beneficial (and political correctness be damned...).

But for others, this is simply not the case (Lord knows, I was one of this latter kind)—I would have hated being disciplined in this way and reacted to it in a fight-to-the-death kind of way. And so, growing up, I made sure that I was always well-behaved enough to not have to be, and so was able to do my own thing most of the time without needing authority imposed on me. Had my parents decided to apply some “old-fashioned” discipline to me, my reaction would have been to fight them until they understood that this simply was not going to work for us,

no matter what the cost to myself. However, for whatever reason, I could always respond to being reasoned with, and when treated this way acted like a real little mensch almost all the time.

Until fairly recently, I had thought because this was true of me, it must be true of every child—then I met a lot more children and talked to my friends about their experiences parenting and being parented and realized it simply wasn't the case. The kind of liberal, reasonable, hands-off approach that worked so well for me, might, with another child, have produced an unhappy, disrespectful brat who felt thoroughly neglected and acted out all the time to demonstrate this.

Not that the kind of child, who would respond to even the most loving spanking by becoming truly and aggressively defensive, should not have boundaries set for him or her. As it is with the dogs we keep as pets, children need to know that boundaries of acceptable and non-acceptable conduct exist so that they can grow and be happy. It is simply that other (perhaps more “adult”) forms of discipline—such as “community service” projects like whitewashing a wall or cleaning out an attic, instead of going on a family movie trip—may be more beneficial to their growth and happiness.

It is the same with me and M—both of us have our vulnerabilities, both of us make human mistakes. For M, when she needs to be held accountable (or sometimes just comforted by my loving strength) a spanking provides a wonderful release and a feeling of being well-

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loved and well-taken-care-of. When I fail in some way towards her (say, when I am inadvertently inconsiderate or disrespectful to her) I take myself in hand not through punishment, but by offering a formal and sincere apology immediately and making some kind of practical amends as soon as possible. Being the dominant partner, I choose the kind of amends to make—but I do so intuitively, based on the nature of my offense and what I believe M needs to know that I understand my failing and to reassure her of my love and respect for her.

And so far, this appears to work wonderfully well for us. We have a relationship which is founded on a fundamental basis of equality—the needs and desires of both partners are held to be equally valuable and equally worthy of cherishing and respect. But we understand the value of the wisdom that “Equal does not mean the same.” Just as any parent worthy of their children loves all of them equally and unconditionally, but would never force their bookishly inclined son to compete for the soccer team, nor force their athletically-gifted daughter to take extra-credit classes in ancient Greek. They will, and should, encourage the bookish son to take some form of exercise and the athletic daughter to complete her studies as well as she is reasonably able. But they understand that true healthy balance for each child as an individual is not a zero-sum game—providing precisely the same amount of each kind of activity for each child, regardless of that child's natural inclinations, is simply not good parenting.

Similarly, M and I enjoy a relationship that allows us to follow our truest natures, meets our needs and fulfills and satisfies our desires. It is a relationship that strengthens both of us and allows both of us to grow and to experience great joy in our lives. And should our relationship fail to meet the criteria that either the politically correct or the moralistically conservative feel are necessary to be “healthy” or “normal”... Well, then, in my humble opinion, that is simply an unforeseen but much appreciated bonus. Offending the dogmatic and hypocritical sensibilities of those on both the Right and the Left—and tweaking those who refuse to be honest, even with their own selves, in the pursuit of conformity to whatever ideology—is one of the smaller pleasures in life that every adult man and woman should be able to enjoy.¹³⁴

“WHAT'S IN IT FOR THE MAN? FREEDOM!” (10 JANUARY 2004)

In the modern Western world, many men feel shackled and blocked by society's dictates and the double standards they have to adhere to where women are concerned. In your average relationship in which all decisions must be mutual, the man's freedom is limited: he can't express his natural assertiveness and dominance without attracting his partner's ire. Men in ordinary modern relationships constantly come up against limits, boundaries, and constraints. The kind of relationship discussed on Taken In

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Hand sweeps all that away, freeing the man to act as he sees fit.

Being in this kind of relationship makes me feel free. Because my decisions go, I have the power to direct events, something I find liberating. I believe that most men who live in the modern world in a “normal” relationship would find this freeing. Going from ordinary relationships to a relationship in which you are the head of the household and your partner is submissive to you is the most incredibly liberating, freeing experience a man can have. It makes me feel King of the World.

Being able to express my assertiveness instead of keeping it firmly in check in accordance with modern women's demands makes me feel fully alive and free for the first time, as though I have arrived as a real man—powerful, effective in the world, and a success.

When you have the freedom to make all the decisions affecting your life, you feel free to pursue your goals, you feel effective, you feel that nobody is holding you back, stopping you get where you want to be.

With all the above said, what remains is perhaps the finest part of all—you feel appreciated and loved by the woman. You feel accepted and in control. Lady readers: don't underestimate the importance of making a man feel accepted and appreciated. If you want your partner to change, you're not accepting him for what he is. When my girlfriend J looked me in the eye and agreed to obey my decisions, I felt ten feet tall. I felt deeply peaceful, with something of a high. For the first time in my life, someone was

accepting and appreciating me for the man that I am, for *being* a man, giving me the freedom to make the decisions I want to make.

That J trusts me with this level of decision-making makes me feel fantastic. I feel a sense of *gratitude* for this level of trust. Other men are shackled and constrained by their partners' demands; I am truly free. I have a woman whose trust in me and belief in me is absolute. I have a woman who loves me enough to have set me free.

What more could any man ask for?¹³⁵

“JOURNEY INTO TRUE SUBMISSION” (12 JANUARY 2004)

I remember when we first began the spanking. I was uncomfortable with the whole ball of wax in some ways, but had already agreed to it and so continued with it until I felt that we gave it a good attempt. I recall the first time and how much it hurt. I had never been spanked *ever*, and this was not what I had had in mind. I suppose I liked the concept and I the sensed that this could be a way to take the more wild and spirited me to a place that was saner. I felt that then maybe my relationship would have a real chance at working. I really wanted to be a more loving, submissive, caring and trusting partner—not one to constantly fight for rights. Half the time, I do not even know for sure what rights I was fighting so hard to keep. All I was sure about was that I wanted them and wanted them with passion! I kept myself from being close

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and protected myself by repeating in my head statements like, "I will not be taken", and the statements were working... I was far from feeling close in the relationship. And this was difficult to understand, felt very uncomfortable, and I felt insecure and took it out in some wild ways.

So.... I fought the pain and the "corner time" (which was mostly time I needed to spend in "the position" prior to and after the spankings... not every time, just the times he felt I needed it. I eventually learned inside and out that I was not going to win the fight against either the spankings or the time out if it was ordered. It was when I let go of the fighting and learned to listen more and reflect that I grew leaps and bounds as a person and our relationship began to heal.

The self discovery was wild and I learned things about myself I would never admit were a part of me in a million years of fighting and attacking and being miserable. I learned for, example, that I had a big pride issue. That fact I did not even wish to consider. But I really was prideful and learned to see it in me and watch it coming too. I learned of the destruction that this attitude brought and could bring in the future and adjusted to that hard set of facts.

As time passed, when I saw and felt pride and it is ugly self-rising, I was actually able to head it off by dealing with it before I blew it all the way to the point of being spanked. (Yeah!) Then, pride and inability to control it before it got out of hand became a major offense. After I learned it well enough to see it as it

was coming, there was little excuse to hold onto it. And since we both knew that and had been over it and over it many times already, (I tend to be a slow learner unfortunately), the spankings became increasingly painful as the offense was or should have been more avoidable. So then, as a bigger offense, the punishment was harsher; however, there was a good note too! The offense happened a lot less often as I grew in self-control and self-discipline, and we naturally became closer. I wish I could say it is not a problem any more, but from time to time, life gets busy and I get into a "frame" and forget. Reminders are always there for me though.

I think that sometimes we tend to think of "just us" way too much and protect ourselves for reasons that are not even really there. I mean in some strange way, I had a bad habit of first looking at others when things went wrong or even when I blew it. They made me, they are doing what they are doing because they just want to look right all the time, I cannot allow anything above spankings in our contract because I am not comfortable with them.

Take the issue of time outs. That's something I did not enjoy at all either. My corner time isn't always called-for or used, and if it is, it's mostly being on the bed in "the position" prior to being spanked for a bit and then for a good while from time to time after I had been spanked. Just there and in position, embarrassing or maddening at the start—I was there exposed and feeling pissed off that I was right and he

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was wrong and did this because he is mean and blah blah blah blah...

But in either of those attitudes, we were not getting anywhere and if I had taken the stance that I would permit spankings with conditions on the time out or other conditions it would be double a waste of time and just the act of playing like we were in this for our relationship and happiness. And it is a waste.

How dishonest it is to say "yes, I will submit to spankings when you call for them, *but*, you may not ask me to submit if you use a paddle or you do it when I am wet or if you give me time out, I won't agree to any of those." So where is the trust there? Where is your stopping in the control and the distrust and how much will your partner feel he has in this deal. You don't trust him to do what he feels is right; you will be submissive up to a point and not any further, and you will get to argue about anything at any time and even in the midst of the spanking. It's like a snooty image or mean hard as* image that may be seen as a touch of bullsh*t coming out of the mouth.

Like the snob in a typical high school, a girl must always keep up her popular stance and her good image and protect her place at school... *but* the problem is she just doesn't have her heart in the work, she just wants the benefits to appear and be there... with no pain or strain. And so when things begin to look badly or hopeless—she comes up with a plan to tell her peers or parents or teachers exactly what they want to hear and then back those phony words up with a few small

tokens of movement. She knows in her heart she is just telling them what information will make her look the most dedicated and full of what it takes to keep on the top. She also knows that her heart is not in the work or the real attachments with people. She knows all that and even if no one else did, she did. And how can she ever feel like her popularity is being measured for who she is and not for what she is faking? She has her limits and makes them known to all, but that seems reasonable for her to do since she is so dedicated to the program. But she is not and her heart isn't there and she is faking it for appearances and to keep what she wants to keep and who she wants to keep, making sure they have just enough to make them love her, but not enough to form honest and real and genuine relationships with anyone.

You cannot do that when you are faking what you are doing and pretending to be compliant with a person you are not even interested in being. Not only is it dishonest, but also in a way, it is using others for your own benefit, and fooling them into a false love, leaving you lonely and later bitter.

So you put restrictions and guidelines on your partner and, whether you know it or not, you are showing you do not trust him or his choices for you. You are saying, "Yes, I will be submissive" when you are not being submissive at all. Your actions, rules, boundaries, and stipulations are making it more of a show. A play to make your partner and maybe others think you are submissive and willing to really work on

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your relationship and trust and letting go of all your control for the relationship and for your own personal growth. It is not a sacrifice; it is more a game you play. It is not real.

This is not to say that we should give up our lives, lay down all our free will and personality to our partner, and lose who we are for good. It just seems like it, especially at the beginning. You feel that you must remain in some sort of control over this whole situation and in reality; you are putting yourself on one side of the relationship and your partner on the opposing side. It becomes more a power struggle against an enemy than a partnership of two people working toward one goal as a team.

Fighting the concept cannot work if you go into a situation, or even a spanking in itself, thinking of what you are losing and how the other is taking from you. Then you are two and you are not working together and you are in fact an enemy of sorts working to see who will win and who will be right and who makes the big sacrifices and who uses the other... yucky.

When you do make that effort to work together honestly and in the direction of a partnership, you cannot simply submit to a spanking and then lay there, dwelling on who is at fault and who is right. You being to learn even if bit by bit, that the spanking is not an act for you to get over quickly and easily so that you can just move on in your activities of the day. You really will begin to see how the submission is a freeing and a gain for you personally and in your relationship both. Letting go

totally and learning to trust and being truly submissive is the only way it will work and the only way you can achieve that feeling of freedom and deeper connection and love.... and a way to happiness. It was not until I gave up all the fighting and rebellion that put me against him in an ever lasting game of who is right and who is wrong; what I needed and what I did not deserved, that I was able to see real growth in all of it. Once I surrendered my rebellious spirit and fighting and just submitted fully, I felt incredibly light inside and out, really, a good feeling. And it was in those time outs, I was able to really listen and take what I heard to heart.

It was tough, I will not lie. I was way gone, damaged by some incredibly abusive situations in my life beginning with 24/7 drunk parents who would exceptionally mean and abusive in the mental and emotional areas. They make it clear kids were to be seen only on occasion and rarely heard. That kids were second class and could be pushed and hit and yelled at and put down ... and told they were not wanted.

Through a good deal of that and more, I found it very hard to enter into a relationship where I needed to give up all the protections that I had learned in life and submit to someone else for my own good. I felt squished in life and did not like the feeling of giving up all of my control and my self-protection tools. And I really did not like being spanked firmly by someone I thought was more often than not the reason our relationship was in trouble in the first place. And what is interesting

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is, as it turns out, I was really in the wrong most of the time. I believed that his spanking was often a way for him to cover up his own guilt and not face his errors—and take the focus off of himself and make it mine (again). You know it is incredible, all those things we think and feel and come to “know” during the height of an emotional whirlwind, embarrassing too in the end, when we are calm and we know...

I was really against the concept of thinking of my partner more. I felt strongly that it was a first step in a direction that would make it so I lost the only few parts of me that I felt I owned. It was way too much just thinking about being in a place that spanking and submitting was completely in the hands of my partner. Living as if he was the “one” final word, the right word, the person in my life to behave for and be in my mind a slave to, was overwhelming. I hated the corner time too; it was humbling for sure... embarrassing too... but in that, where is the trust and where is the “oneness” in feeling embarrassments? I finally think I broke my attitude and rebellion out of pure exhaustion and a loss of will to continue fighting a battle with my partner that I was not going to win or come close to winning ... and I always had to win.

I was humbled ... in a way that I surrendered the games and power struggles and fighting just to go with the program so I could rest. After that first spanking and the reality of that pain, I hated the whole program. The fact was it hurt more than I would have wanted it to hurt and during the spanking I could not get

up and run and somehow escape this pain and thought “how can I do this and accept it and allow it, it's painful... and about the corner time and the being still, right! I wanted a rescue, I wanted anything that would kill this commitment and contract I had gotten myself in.... and it was he vs. me...

I am glad I stuck it out. My plan was that for a good four months or so, I would go along with this spanking thing. I knew it was painful, but four month or so was not too long and it would show him that I gave it a shot, a good show of sorts. I could surely maintain a look of submission and keep my partner around while waiting a decent amount of time to call an end to the whole spanking phase. I would announce that they did not in fact help and that an end to them was best for us both.

In time, I began to let go of all that baggage, be still, and really listen to my partner's logic and his observations and such. When I saw firsthand that he really was acting on a consistent level with us, I could really trust him, respect him and his wishes, trust that when he spanked me, it was out of love for me, and respect for our relationship. He did want healing and to be more partners and loving deeper and more securely, and, seeing a real wanting to heal us and stay together, I was really becoming secure for once in my life. I was happy and I knew a world of new things about me.

But a strange thing happened... It was in the process and the struggles I created to hold on to my rights and me as a person in this world and my

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equal place, (if not better than merely equal),

I realized for real that it really was more of an "us" thing. And as terribly hard as this concept was for me to finally understand, (and it may be for you as well), with total submission to the spankings, you have no time or really no right to use that time to include your partner in the picture. That time, your time to be punished, is spent on focusing on just you, your reactions and your errors. You have a lot to do and feel during this time too. The spanking, the really listening to what your partner is saying without looking at his part at all, time out to really think about who and what we are as individuals and time to look at our own self as a source of friction. And in that time, we simply have no room and should not at all look to our partner as wrong in any way, even if you think he is 110% wrong. Because it does not matter if it *was* he who started the problems. It does not matter if "He Made You" do what you knew was wrong or say what you should not have. If you can really and honestly *not* look to your partner as wrong or a part of the problem during the time that you are both working on you, and you are being punished, then you will see immediate changes. You will immediately begin to grow leaps and bounds and really see inside yourself, it is awesome.

Rather than to see my partner as a "wrong, do not look at him in the entire matter. You must have thought at one time or many that he was stubborn, a brute or mean dictator who never saw himself as being

wrong. Or perhaps you have felt that he was one that would never admit to being wrong it his very life depended on it. Maybe you felt he was one that must win in every argument and all subjects and you must concede to have peace. Or maybe you just have seen him as a very wrong, misguided, mean person. However, you have felt right in a situation where you were to be spanked does not really matter at all. To come to that and to think of only your own involvement, your own issues and your own reactions to the situation and not consider or give thought to his role in the situation or matter... right or wrong role, is the place you should set some goals to achieve. That is especially true during a spanking or time out when we are required to concentrate on us. If you hear nothing else in any of the things that I have said, believe me when I say that in the time you are being disciplined, it is not a good time to debate his wrongness at all anyway... It is not the time to bring up past or future anything, but certainly not the time to continue the argument that got you to where you are now, with your rear exposed and facing a spanking. Trust me, it is not right in any sense.

Where, in all honesty, is the trust, and where is the submission in the spanking relationship, if you are thinking of how wrong it is you are in that place and how much your partner is doing you wrong and is doing the act so he can feel right...? Where is the submission if you are not free from looking at the motives and heart of your partner? Are we not then doing exactly what we are

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feeling they are doing? Are we just accusing them of just making us guilty and not even looking at themselves, as if we are at that very moment? Only we cannot see it because we just see them. And the spankings will not work nor will the time out if we cannot get past that.

If you cannot submit with honest trust that you actually could be crazed and not see it in yourself and that no matter what he is doing, you are in a situation where you are to look inside yourself and give your partner the trust that makes it work. And when your mind drifts into your partner's actions at a time of reflection, or even while being spanked, try to feel and see and know in your heart that you need to let go of your defenses and your blame and your side-taking for long enough to accept what you are going through. It really helps to see your partner as a part of you and not the "other side" or the enemy side. Seeing him as a loving partner, a close friend and a concerned man who cares for you a lot makes a huge difference. Just thinking about that concept should move you. He is working WITH you so that you can be free and happy and the two of you can grow! You are a "team of one" with one goal... I understand that it may be your own bottom, but believe me, it is both of you together working on the good.

I believe that when you see things in perspective, for one, it gets easier to find that place... and when you look at your partner as part of the team to make you and him incredibly happy, you are even willing to see what it is that is in you that

could contribute to unhappiness between you. In this journey, your partner is acting in a way that is more than likely a focused one, not one led by emotions and all those chemical reactions we have.... and the goal is for you both to be all you can possibly be on your journey. When you are free to trust, free to give your whole self to this, open to the concept and all the details which can include time out.... and just let go of all that garbage. Do not enter in and say to yourself that you are giving up "as much as you can give up right now" because that is not only a cop-out, it's not honest, it's only a show, it's not giving, it's not trusting in your partner it's just wrong.

If you are dictating all the rules, you will and will not obey, why even bother with spanking as a couple? If you can only commit to the act of spanking and then moving on with a clean slate having leaned nothing more than survival of a bad yet quick spanking and do so with no reflection or effort.... you are only hurting your rear end and going through pain for nothing. So, you have a sore bum for a while? So? You did not give up or give in to that silly submission thing and the whole time you were over his knee you were thinking what a jerk he is for trying to dodge his part in the thing and how much you want to bite his knee. There is nothing at all therapeutic in that, nothing healing and nothing of value unless you enjoy pretense. That just makes you be a part of a pretend relationship like a painful role-play in a porn movie about the entire spanking

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thing. There is no heart, no soul, no reflection and no growth in the act at all. And then to top it off, you have a frustrated partner who thinks he is not effective and wants to stop the whole act. Then the act will slow down and soon after, your contract is ended.

What kind of relationship is it when you are in the face of a loved one and say that you are one to "just give what you feel like giving".... What does it say about your relationship when you are just considering your own plight and at the same time, downing someone else for your own gain, your own self fueled champagne, sort of like a politician would do, only you two are to be as one.

Search yourself if you can and really be honest about this; is it a commitment or a show?

This is not to say that there is no fault in our partners. But if you really think about it, we woman tend to get out of control, filled with an excess of moods and feelings that get so filled with energy, we cannot handle them. Men are not so much like us in that regard. They can live a lifetime without feeling overwhelmed with emotional energy to the point of being sick. It is as if we are in a denial and cannot see that it is our emotions driving us to be and act insane. We act out of the emotions of the moment and that makes it difficult to see clearly see the truth of any given situation. With this highly emotional moment, "knowing" we are right, and we should win and have rights to even strut out our righteous selves, we may not even see clearly enough to know

that our emotions led us down the wrong path. We can (and a lot of the time are) be led by the irrational part of our brain when in heated moments. And what your brain says, and where it's getting it is notions, may be doing you a disfavor by telling you that you should strut. Better to calm down and wait until the logic side of your mind kicks in.

And then we find out later, emotional knowledge of a heated moment or disagreement does not logic make! When we are so far gone and see no way at all that our partner could possibly be right in their thinking and we know inside and out that we are the "ones". And then we throw our justified fits or do the drama thing... it can be a comfort to have that much needed shock spanking to create a bit more reality for you again. And there is nothing like it, the power of a firm and deliberate spanking! Then after the spanking, we have time to process it all. Time to really think about the discipline and the situation and steps leading to the place you find yourself in now. It is a great time to look at our own responsibilities, our own out of control emotional bit and maybe see we were acting out a bit too rash, too wild, over-doing it to the extreme. Maybe we can see that we were actually sacrificing our loving relationship for a moment of pride or "being right" and dancing our righteous dance.

If you have a deep love and trust for your partner; you express it to him; you have built up a good amount of restraint; have the ability to and do consider your own role in your relationship; have a degree of

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self discipline; and the courage to face things in yourself that we may not have wanted to face and then can share all that with your partner, you should not feel embarrassment. If you think about it, how close, tight-knit, and loving is a relationship where you are embarrassed in front of a partner who sees you as the one he loves and the one he treasures. What benefit is keeping that hold on certain aspects of yourself you want hidden so badly? What part of the "you" that is in you that you feel so compelled to hide from your partner, your team member making one? What is holding back anyway, if not just for deceiving you and your partner?

It is for those reasons and many more that I can say without a doubt that spanking and time out when needed is a value, a tool and a many times needed act of love. (If you are honest with yourselves, ladies, you will know this in your heart).... We really do not have to fake a contract nor go just half way to submission and trust with our partner. We can make our way to let all the defenses go and take our walls down. We can end the fake "half way" submissions for good... And even though the actually wall tearing is unpleasant, and you will have to do the tearing yourself, you will find it very worth it. The bonus is that once you begin all of this, it goes fast. And when you begin to feel that power submission and letting go can bring and have the trust in your partner that you want, all in honesty... you will begin to see yourself fully. You will love the feeling to such a degree that you go out of your way to find

more. And that peace begins to give you and your partner the closeness and the real love, the deep stuff, you have always looked for.

And although it goes against your grain and what you know in life to be your defenses and although it is all way hard and physically painful or embarrassing at times in the beginning, there is one thing that you need to know and remember throughout your journey, (it saves time and speeds things up a little). And that is:

Hurting only makes us grow – and the hurting inside and out that you feel now, is the first step of being real.

No pain, no sacrifice. No sacrifice and no pain, no real gains. And it will never be *real*. If you can't understand the concept or sort through my mess of ramblings, try this: Go to the library or bookstore and check out or buy the Velveteen Rabbit and read it slowly and mindfully and then read it again. The concept is right in this book written for children...

You may know the story, but if you were young when you read it and living the kid's life, you may not "know" the story well enough to understand. But be assured, if you give yourself some time out and in that and in that time read the book... you will see that the concept is in there, you will. I am confident about at least that much. Maybe that is all I am super confident about, because we are all so different and unique with different needs and situations... but the book tells about real... and does well doing it, and is simplistic and easy to read, unlike me who

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needs to over explain to the point of confusion... sorry.

All of this is in my own humble opinion and not a final word on the whole idea of spanking... maybe I am off base, but I feel good inside so I cannot be too far off. I hope that I have not come off as some authority or wacko or preacher, or anything other than a rambling person who cares for you all and your personal journey in life. I merely wanted to share this because I believe that the time out, when ordered, is part of the package. The package that is of some sacrifice and loss of a bit of your will is the one you take. Nothing good came from nothing and no greatness can come from token contracts and shows.

If you can say "this is okay" and then turn around and say "this part of it is not okay" then are you not just suddenly dictating your own rules and playing a role that you agreed was to be your partner's role? Are you just trying to be in control yet looking as if you were playing the part of a submissive partner? Is it surrendering your wild and crazed self and your insecurities and your lack of real commitment to your partner when you dictate what you want and what is easy? And do you trust him and is he trustworthy?

If he is trustworthy, what is your pact for spanking in the first place? Do you want the benefit without the pain? The surrender with half the control? Do you want to be the leader in it all? Do you truly want the relationship to work? Do you sincerely want to see yourself as you really are, good and bad and grow from that to be a better person and

more happy than ever? Do you really want your relationship to grow and get better or stay the way it has always been year after year? Or worse, do you really want to risk it all and possibly reach a place where you are too far-gone to heal and have gone to far for that to happen?

Finally, do you trust or do you just want to show your partner that you are trying and sacrificing when in reality, you are not even close? Spanking is not a tool to be used by one side or the other. There are not sides here to take. You are a team, both dedicated to the relationship and your love. The spanking is not a dominant power thing that is used to show you who is the boss, it's just one partner who helps the other—their better half... feel more secure, calm, safe, loved and a tool you can use to be a much more loving and open and honest woman.... the spankings will get to be further apart. They will still hurt, you may feel anger and rage after one and need to reflect or be spanked until you settle down and think it through logically and look inside yourself.... Spankings and time out are not supposed to be fun or feel good. If they did, they would merely be erotic play sessions with the two of you acting out in an almost BDSM sort of way.... and where is the growth in that?

I know this is long, and if you have read this far I am truly amazed and shocked and congratulate you on your patience and preservation. God bless the ones who take the time to hear me, I do know it's a suckie long time and maybe turned out to be a waste of your time, but know that I

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appreciate you hearing me out and my ramblings...

Hugs of health and happiness to you all...¹³⁶

"OUT OF CONTROL, INSANE, DRIVEN BY OUR EMOTIONS? No way!" (13 JANUARY 2004)

Do we *choose* to be taken in hand *because we want to be*, such as for the connection or because the whole idea is very erotic? Or is it that we women *need* to be controlled because we can't control ourselves? As a phlegmatic, competent, rational sort of person, I have always argued that this is something even the most logical, sane woman can choose. If you have to be the sort of person who can't function sensibly in the world to be taken in hand, I don't qualify! But that doesn't mean that I don't want to be taken in hand. I do! From what Nina says in this nonsense comment, she feels the same way:

Driven by emotions and insane??!!

The following jumped out at me:

...we woman tend to get out of control, filled with an excess of moods and feelings that get so filled with energy, we cannot handle them. Men are not so much like us in that regard. They can live a lifetime without feeling overwhelmed with emotional energy to the point of being sick. It is as if we are in a denial and cannot see that it is our emotions driving us to be and act insane. We act out of the emotions of the moment and that makes it diffi-

cult to see clearly see the truth of any given situation.

What nonsense! If there were any truth in this, how would all the women who, throughout history (and often against overwhelming odds), have managed to achieve great things? And today, where the playing field has become somewhat more equal, women are getting ever closer to achieving their potential.

I am a strong, professional woman, and am perfectly capable of running my own life. I most certainly am not ruled by my emotions, nor am I ever 'out of control'! As an 'alpha-female' with certain submissive tendencies I have, out of my own free will, chosen to defer to my dear husband. This does not mean that I am in any way weaker than him. We are partners in life—but DD enhances our relationship, draws us closer, enhances trust and respect between us and generally makes our life together run more smoothly.

This is how we chose to lead our lives, but we would not presume to tell other couples that our way is the only way, or that our relationship is based on woman's weakness or 'insanity'. The idea that women have to be controlled by their menfolk because they, poor things, are 'too emotional' or 'out of control' is just too ludicrous. And I can't imagine any sane man wanting to put up with such nonsense...¹³⁷

"A NEW JOURNEY" (14 JANUARY 2004)

We're Sam and Missy. We have been married for 23 years and have had a good marriage, one that we have both worked at maintaining. But Sam always had an empty feeling that something was missing both within himself and in the marriage.

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Missy was certainly a pleaser, and attentive to Sam's needs, and Sam, the ex-Military Officer, MBA, and owner of his successful company, has always been a take-charge guy. He led and she followed. It worked.

Sounds like a pretty good arrangement. So what was missing?

Well, here is Sam's account of the series of events:

For months I have been looking for a part of me that was and has been totally unfulfilled, not knowing what it was. It was certainly sexually linked, but I couldn't find the source of the emptiness and frustration. I explored all types of web sites, sometimes getting entangled in porn, which only led to more frustration and emptiness. How empty I felt.

In continuing my search, I stumbled across the term, "Domestic Discipline." Again, in searching using this term, I came across a whole bunch of porn sites with models blistering each other, adding to my frustration. This wasn't it. But, then I came across a chat group which I monitored. These were real people dealing with real issues and incorporating domestic discipline into their lives. Yes! This hit home. I wasn't sure why, but I knew that I was on the right path to identify the root cause of the missing link(s).

Now that I was in the ballpark, I needed to find resources to get to the bottom of this issue. I read and read the posts in the chat group, and had to filter through and discard a lot of fantasy junk that people had written in. But in my exploration I was able to get a feel for how the *real* couples were working together. Well, then

came the key: in response to a question by a new member of the group seeking information, one of the women writers referenced the Taken In Hand web site. I immediately jumped to this site and knew that I had found the Motherlode. It was a goldmine of information.

I read the articles and the comments and I found *me* (my feelings, desire for intimacy, desire to teach and instruct, etc.) embedded in the writings of some of the people who posted to the site. I was excited. I found that the source of my frustration was that I was naturally dominant (not a sadist, not one who looks to beat his wife—I am very gentle with her and naturally protective of her and wouldn't do anything to damage her—but make no mistake, I was clearly identified as dominant). Once I digested this discovery and its impact on me, I explored each article that I could consume. Then I found the source of my emptiness.

After reading some of the articles, I longed for the relationship and intimacy that many of the writers—men and women—described. I read the frustration of some of the women who longed for a man *like me* who would guide them with a firm, loving hand. Someone who would cherish his wife for who she was, yet discipline her and watch her grow so that she would become even more cherished in his life. I wouldn't be considered a pervert because I could see that my personality was exactly what the women in the articles kept describing. What a relief! What a discovery! I now knew that what was missing in me and our lives was that my need

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to discipline in an intimate relationship was totally unfulfilled.

But then came a new problem. How do I reveal this to Missy? How do I communicate to her this emptiness in me and in our relationship? How do I bring her into this thought process and not scare her? Even though we had used mild erotic spanking in our lovemaking and we had both enjoyed that, I was very fearful in discussing my dominant nature, domestic discipline, and everything that went with it. I was concerned that she would feel pressured into a lifestyle that she was uncomfortable with, which would create discord in our marriage. Remember, she's a great gal, and we have a solid marriage. I thought, "Hey stupid, if it ain't broke, don't fix it!" But, then I thought about how we often settle for so much less in life just to be safe.

Well, no guts, no glory. No risk, no return. No leadership, no results. Here goes...

I wrote an email love letter to her, describing to her what I had found out about myself and what I desired from our relationship. In the letter, I outlined domestic discipline, as best I could. I also gave her a link to two articles that I had picked out from *Taken In Hand*, and asked that she read them with an open mind.

After I'd sent it, I felt a huge sense of relief—for a while. Then, I started to feel like Tom Cruise in *Jerry McGuire*, where he developed this concept for dealing with clients in a fair and honest way (this, in a cut-throat industry), and late at night, he distributed it to his peers to be read the next morning. It all seemed right

after he let it fly, but when he woke up the next morning, he knew that he had taken an enormous risk and left himself totally exposed. That's how I felt.

In the dark, at 5AM on Saturday I wrote and sent the email letter. She got out of bed around an hour later. All through the morning after she had gotten up, I kept waiting and waiting for Missy to check her email. She normally does this a few times a day and almost certainly does it in the morning. Well, this Saturday, she seemed to take forever to check the mail. It was torture!

Then it happened. In the late afternoon (finally!), while I was watching a ball game on TV, she went into the study and stayed there for some time—a fairly long time. I tried to keep my mind on the game, but it was tough. I kept waiting for her to come out in tears, or with divorce papers in hand, or an angry expression in her eyes. Finally, she came out. We talked.

To my surprise, she wasn't shocked. She told me that she was somewhat confused, not understanding all of what I was trying to tell her in the letter or what she had read on the web site. So, with a knot in my stomach, I explained what I had researched and what I had found. More than that, I asked her if she would be willing to explore this with me. To her great credit, she said that while she could understand how I, the husband, would benefit from this due to my dominant nature, she couldn't understand how the wife would benefit. But, she was willing to go forward—for me!

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Because your site is so tastefully done (my congratulations and deepest thanks), I was able to direct her to begin reading more of the articles. If this were a porn site, it just wouldn't have worked for us.

Remember, this conversation started on a Saturday afternoon. By Saturday night, after reading and consuming a number of articles—she must have spent three hours on your site—she had developed a very good understanding as to how much of an impact this could make in her personal growth—something that she had not seen just a few hours before that.

After talking about her (our) discovery well into the evening, we went to bed, and had an intense lovemaking experience. Sunday morning, she told me that she had had a rather restless night while the domestic discipline possibilities raced through her head. On the way back from church, Missy revealed to me that she would welcome my guidance and that she would like to recommend that she be given both “reassurance spankings” as well as “discipline spankings” (something that she learned from one of the articles that she read). She went on to describe the tremendous benefit that she could see from domestic discipline for her and how our marriage would be enhanced in such an intimate way.

I was shocked at her level of understanding in such a short time. What took me months to discover, she had a handle on in hours. Pretty sharp little lady, huh?

Missy told me that she would submit to me, unconditionally. I was

to make decisions for us that would impact the intimacy of our marriage. Now, my head was reeling from the incredible series of events that had taken place in such a short time. She has given me the freedom to be me, to be fulfilled, while bearing the responsibility of guiding her to be fulfilled in her role as a woman and wife.

We've started this new journey together. We know that it may be difficult. She has had numerous reassurance spankings and only one discipline spanking. But, the benefits are already starting to flow. She has become so confident, so self-assured that it is amazing to watch. While I have given her a simple set of rules to start working on, she has developed goals that she wants accomplished and is organizing herself to achieve these goals. The intimacy level in our marriage is off the scale and has broken all previous highs.

Where has domestic discipline been all our married life? If only we had found it sooner. But, our new journey has begun. We are excited!¹³⁸

“HAPPILY MARRIED TO A DOMINANT MAN” (15 JANUARY 2004)

I'm 43 and my husband is 45. We have been married many years and have been negotiating a D/s relationship for a few years. At first I wrote “have a D/s relationship” but that's not accurate. You *have* a donut but you negotiate the currents in a river.

I adopted a submissive role in our marriage early on and my husband

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slid into the role of dominant. It was a natural thing, just the way we were together and not something we put any thought into. This was before I had heard of D/s or the internet.

Then we were online and I learned about the different ways people have of being together. My own wants and needs, most of which are out of fashion at best and downright offensive to some at worst, started to make sense to me. At first I was very excited and tried to push us both into a more pronounced D/s relationship that included domestic discipline. Big mistake. Slower is better and as we relaxed and just played with it, we gradually shifted toward more defined roles. The more he and I talked about it, the more aware we became that our relationship had always been D/s flavored and just built on that.

It works well for us. He likes being head of the household and he is good at it. Whereas he is responsible almost to a fault, I tend to be flighty and not take things seriously, so we balance each other out. I just remembered while writing this that I backed into the fence of the neighbor behind us yesterday and broke one of the boards. I forgot to mention it to my neighbor or my husband. That's typical for me but he would never forget something like that. :)

We don't do a lot of disciplinary spanking. I get a few swats every night when he puts me to bed but they are affectionate and indulgent in nature. If I do something he really loves, he'll haul off and really smack me hard, lol.

The few serious spankings I've received were delivered at lightening speed with no ritual whatsoever. They generally are just enough to get my attention and relieve his frustration. We play a whole lot harder than that and have a collection of implements and stuff.

He has threatened to take a strap to my hands as punishment. :0 Happily he has never done it because the thought scares the heck out of me.

I am very sensitive to his displeasure and *hate* being lectured. Most consequences I suffer are not appealing in any way. If I spend too much on a credit card, he cuts up the card into little pieces. If I am cranky from lack of sleep, I get put to bed very early for the next couple nights. If I know he's unhappy with me, I try to hide in the basement and hope he forgets about it. Not that he ever does.

I'm happiest when he is happy (isn't that co-dependence?) so that's what I shoot for, and I do pretty well most of the time. He's easy to get along with anyway and has a good sense of humor.

That's us in a nutshell.¹³⁹

"RESOLVING AN INTERNAL CONFLICT" (16 JANUARY 2004)

In his article, "On being the head of the household," Bill states, "Society told her that no woman should ever be truly submissive to her man." I completely agree that a woman should have the opportunity to be as equal to or as independent of a man as she wants to be, and I'd be the first to support her in that.

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But as Bill suggests, what we are told is *opportunity* feels like heavy societal *expectations*. In many instances real harm is done in trying to conform to these expectations that shouldn't exist in the first place.

How many hundreds of thousands of people—perhaps millions—are miserable because they feel compelled to live in a “normal” relationship (normal by society's standards, but suppressing what would feel normal and natural to them as individuals) simply because to live otherwise is considered unacceptable? Even more sad, consider those in the situation as I just described but who don't know *why* they are unhappy. Now let's take the sum of those people and multiply that number by 2, 3, 4 or more. If just one of the persons in a relationship is miserable, it's pretty safe to say that this frustration will spill over to their partner too. If children are involved, how happy will they be with two discontented parents? That's a heck of a lot of unhappy people walking around in this world simply because we place unfair expectations on ourselves.

If I seem overly passionate about this, I apologize. Like so many others out there, I was one of those who had an inner need to change the way I was living, and I know how frustrating and confusing this all can be. It's natural for us to want to do what is right in the eyes of our fellow man, but in doing so we can create our own internal conflicts. It would be nice if we were not put in the position of having to choose between the two.

There's an inner need for me to be dominant within my relationship—not domineering—dominant. Yet for 16 years I was in a marriage where spanking was not an option. Okay, I can live with that—or so I thought. After all, my desire to spank my wife is considered wrong anyway, right? I was telling myself, “she's normal and I'm perverted, so get over it.” (It's funny how we accept certain things at that age.) But I found that the longer I was denied this special and loving form of communication, the stronger the need grew. I will say, however, that though spanking was not an integral part of our relationship, I was able to express my dominant side to some degree. And even though the marriage ended in a divorce, during those years I was able to help my wife to become more strong and self-reliant. That was a wonderful feeling.

It's interesting how the conclusion of one turn of events leads to another. Living the rest of my life alone does not sound particularly appealing, but then neither does entering into a relationship in which I am not the head of the household.

I turned to browsing the spanking personal ads and began a correspondence with a woman who, from what I can determine thus far, is looking for the exact same thing. She mentioned this website to me so I decided to take a look. Taken In Hand has not changed the desires I've had for so many years, but it has certainly validated them.

Please don't get me wrong, I am not placing blame on society for my past decisions or my stupid rational-

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ization. I'm simply saying that it's a shame that we so often suffer internal conflicts between our own personal preferences and the way we would like to be viewed. Life is better when people have the courage to be true to themselves instead of deferring to what they think "society" expects. In the words of Popeye, the cartoon character: "I am what I am."¹⁴⁰

"HELP! THE ONE I LOVE NOWADAYS RARELY WANTS SEX!" (19 JANUARY 2004)

"Help! I've been with my husband for 5 years, and we have a great marriage in most respects, except in one area: sex! When we first met, he couldn't keep his hands off me, and we were at it morning, noon and night. But now if we do it once a week, I'm lucky. My husband's interest in sex hasn't just diminished, it's died a death. I'm crawling up the walls here! I'm a normal red-blooded woman who needs sex at least three times a day (OK, OK, at least twice a week) to feel sane. I love him to bits and I can tell that he really loves me too, so how come he seems to have lost interest? It really hurts when he's not interested. I've tried seducing him, dressing sexily for him, date nights, a sex contract (hey, don't blame me, it's what a counsellor recommended!), surprising him with a candle-lit bath with rose petals and scented bath oil etc., etc., and nothing has worked." —Mandy

"Can you advise me what a man can do to rekindle the fires of romance in his wife after 19 years of marriage? For the last 11 of those years, we've had sex maybe 30 times in total and I'm about ready to have an affair. I've tried everything I can

think of, but she just gets irritated and snaps at me." —Simon

It is very common problem in long-term conventional relationships for one partner to lose desire for the other. Men lose interest; women lose interest. There is no gender divide here. There are many possible causes, but in many cases, the problem can be solved quite easily, so take heart and read on! I am assuming that in the past, the person you love did love having sex with you, that you have a reasonably good relationship otherwise, and that there are no other problems such as a lack of self-confidence on the part of the other person, etc. If the reason your wife has gone off sex is that you do not find her attractive or you have taken to spending hours on the internet looking at porn, then the problem is a very different one, and is not likely to be solved by the simple measure I am suggesting here.

Feeling pressured kills desire

You may be at a loss to know what caused the problem. Perhaps it started one day when your husband, who was a bit tired after a spectacularly bad day at work, did not feel up to a wild night of passion, and you were slightly insensitive to this, or you became a little anxious that he did not respond as you hoped he would. It might have started any number of ways, but however it started, one thing that is guaranteed to exacerbate it and prolong the problem is pressure.

One of the reasons being taken in hand can be so exciting is, paradoxically, that in eroticising control, it

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creates real desire and real consent. It turns what could be off-putting, unpleasant control into erotic indulgence, pleasurable attention, positive engagement. It tends to eliminate unwanted pressure! So in the long run, you might want to move to the kind of relationship we discuss on *Taken In Hand*. But if the person you love is feeling put off because of pressure for sex, for some, it might be wise to take the course of action detailed below first, to avoid counterproductively adding further undesirable pressure.

When people feel pressured to have sex, it tends to put them right off. Unfortunately, in conventional relationships it is all too easy to exert pressure despite your best intentions. When you want sex, you hope your man wants it too, and if he doesn't, if you are in a conventional exclusive relationship, you are likely to feel a bit disappointed. Sensing your disappointment, your man feels bad, because on the one hand, he wants to make you happy, but on the other, now is really not a good time for him. He might even feel a bit resentful that you seem insensitive to his lack of desire at this moment. He feels a bit pressured. Your expectation is a little off-putting. This leads to a slight dampening of his sexual desire for you which, if you are lucky, will be rectified shortly, but might be exacerbated by more inadvertent pressure on your part.

It is not that you are a horrible person: you are a human being with human wishes and desires and, perhaps, insecurities. You want the person you love to want you, and when

he shows signs of not wanting you, it is human to panic slightly, or to begin to feel a bit desperate for sex. Your man then experiences your panic or desperation as further pressure, and that puts him off even more... which makes you panic and feel even more desperate for sex... and so on, in a vicious circle.

The problem with this sort of vicious circle, apart from the fact that you are "crawling up the walls", is that once your man is feeling slightly pressured (for whatever reason), he is then going to be hypersensitive to any further pressure, and worse, he is going to interpret even the most innocent questions, statements, and actions on your part, as yet more pressure.

You may think that snuggling up against your wife in bed and thus making your desire for her, er, felt, is just your way of letting her know you are, er, up for it. But if your wife is already feeling under pressure sexually, she will find this annoying, insensitive, pressuring (and not just literally!), and distressing. She is more likely to be having dark thoughts about giving you a Bobbit job than giving you a blow job.

Similarly, you may think that when you answer the door to your husband naked and then lead him to your bedroom where you have waiting a bottle of Champagne and a new sex toy (and not just one of the intimidating ones either), you are giving him a nice surprise. But if he is already feeling pressure to have sex with you, or to have it more often, not only is he likely not to respond positively, he is likely to feel

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resentful you for putting him under pressure in this way. If the other person reacts irritably to anything which might possibly be perceived to be pressure for sex, it is likely that pressure is at least part of the problem.

Even very subtle things can cause problems. For example, if you have (whether by chance or design) a particular routine, ritual, or code associated with having sex (e.g., when he has a shower before coming to bed, that means you will have sex; or when she says, "The kids are asleep but I'm not!"; or if you can set your watch by the sexual routine you have) this can, with a bit of bad luck, turn into a pressuring expectation that puts the other person off. And unless you manage not to panic, your reaction to the other person's drop in interest is likely to exacerbate the situation.

Remove all pressure

Back off. Don't—

- have sex
- ask for sex
- hint that you want sex
- look

sad/upset/angry/sulky/disappoint
ed

- make comments
- try to seduce him/her
- press yourself against him/her in bed
- turn a massage into sexual touching
- dress sexily to tempt him
- wander around naked
- talk or joke about sex

—spring romantic surprises on him

- masturbate in his presence
- threaten to see other people
- bring her flowers/chocolates to soften her up
- talk about past times when the two of you were having lots of sex
- be impatient
- try harder
- try so hard to please that you appear desperate
- force the issue

That is, **don't** do those things.

Don't even dress or undress in front of him. (I am not joking. This is important!) Keep the bathroom door locked when you use it, and start wearing non-sexy pyjamas in bed. Never be naked in his presence. When you are feeling pressured for sex, you can experience that as more pressure.

Do be very friendly, attentive, loving, happy, and fun in other ways. You do not want to appear to have lost interest more generally. This is about removing pressure and anything that might be seen as pressure, not about playing games or making the person doubt your love.

Don't just try this for two weeks or a month, think in terms of six months, otherwise you will be inadvertently exuding upsetness about the lack of sex, and that will turn him/her right off instantly. Think longer term to give this a chance of working.

This works because in many relationships, when one person is less interested, instead of backing off, the other tries harder to get the person to have sex. This puts the other per-

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son off even more, and causes the other to become even more desperate to get sex... and so on in a vicious circle. No matter how much the one being pursued for sex might want to want it, he just can't. He needs space to find his own desire again. So back off—but be friendly and happy and nice in non-sexual ways. If he likes being massaged, massage him without even the slightest hint that you want sex. Not a single hint of any kind. If she likes sensual perfumed baths with candles and soft music and a glass of Champagne, give her that—and don't even think of dropping any hints that you want sex.

Even when your partner does show flutterings of interest, do not have sex—yet. Remain strong. Instead, first, for some time—like many days or weeks (depending on how bad a case yours is!)—appear not to notice that they are showing signs of being interested in you sexually again. Continue to be friendly, loving, and nice, but do not even think of showing interest in them sexually. The reason I think you should not jump into sex at the first sign of interest is not to play games with the person you love (no!) but in order to be sure that the desire is real, wholehearted, and great enough that having sex will not yet again make the person feel icky and pressured and put off. In these cases, the first flutterings of desire are fragile and the person is still in a state of hypersensitivity to anything which could possibly be interpreted as pressure. So you need to wait until the flutterings have become an urgent, wholehearted feeling of need

on the other person's part. This can take some time.

Find constructive ways to feel good

While you are doing all this, do things for yourself to make yourself feel good, and to make yourself feel attractive and confident, if that is in any way in doubt. Develop your own life. Increase your self-confidence by becoming more aware of others who are attracted to you. If your husband's lack of interest was killed by insecurity, or if he lacks confidence, avoid like the plague doing anything that might exacerbate that. But if he does not have that problem and just appears to have gone off sex with you for no apparent reason, the following might be worth doing:

When you and your uninterested husband are out with other people, and you notice a man looking at you, smile at him rather than pretending not to see. Start noticing these sexual signals from others more, and don't worry if your partner sees. Unless he has been turned off you as a result of you having been flirting (in which case, on no account do this or anything he might perceive as flirting!) it will help if your partner sees that others are attracted to you. Get yourselves invited to a party or two, dress really well, and let the one you love see that other people find you attractive, and even flirt a little (just a little). If you do do this, on no account do it in such a way that it appears to be hostile, threatening, or humiliating to the one you love. Of course if what you do appears to your man to be a desperate attempt to make him

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jealous, it will be totally counterproductive. The point of this is that looking through someone else's eyes can lift familiarity-induced blindness.

Avoid falling into old pressuring patterns again

Hold off from sex until he is not just begging for it, but crawling up the walls in desperation for it!

Then, after you have first had sex, instead of falling back into a pattern in which you were trying to get him to have sex, and he was pulling away from you, be careful to avoid pushing for sex. Sometimes appear friendly but uninterested again. Don't go back to trying to seduce him or her. Instead, let him initiate—at least for a long time, until you are sure that everything is all right and you have a sexual connection again. This is not about playing games, it is about avoiding exerting off-putting pressure.

Eventually, your man will become interested again. But it will only work if you manage to back off completely. If you are a man, and you just can't resist thrusting your erection into her back at night, or wandering around naked in front of her, or watching her lustfully as she undresses, you are not going to get anywhere, because you have not backed off. If you are a woman whose man seems uninterested in you sexually, and you sigh sadly whenever a love scene comes on on the TV, or if you try to dress to kill for your man to try to seduce him, or you masturbate in bed next to him, etc., you have not backed off. You have to stop all that—everything.

Desist! Back off! Give his desire a chance to re-surface. Give her the psychological (and physical) space to create her own desire. BACK OFF. Have I said that enough times yet? I find that people just aren't aware of all the hints they are dropping, all the ways in which they have not backed off—so search for those and desist.

Afterwards

If the other person has been feeling pressured, I suggest removing the pressure as above first, before trying to introduce intimate control dynamics, because of the risk that the other person may experience that as further pressure. If pressure has played no part in the other person's lack of interest, then it might well be safe to go ahead and raise the subject of introducing control into your relationship, and Taken In Hand. Best of luck!¹⁴¹

"THE EXQUISITE PLEASURE OF CHILDLIKE-NESS IN A WOMAN" (21 JANUARY 2004)

I have said that I love a strong but very feminine woman, J. This may come as a surprise to some, but I also love J's childlikeness. This very sensible, strong, grown-up woman is sometimes adorably childlike. Not *childish*, childlike. There is a big difference. Childlikeness is fun, vibrant, cute, full of life, hope, optimism, trust, and vulnerability. Childishness is being an annoying, petulant brat, and that is not what I'm talking about (though she can do this on occasion as well...)!

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One of the things that I love is when J is looking up at me through lowered eyelashes, giving me a little girl look. She does this quite unconsciously, it's not an affectation or calculated to manipulate, it is just something she does that's a part of her—one of the many different facets of her. That look she gives me is a submissive look that says she is accepting that I am in charge, and it is an acknowledgement that we both know that I am in charge and that that is the way we both want it.

When she does this, it has an instant effect, flooding me with desire and making me melt with love for her. It makes me feel loved, warm, tender, and it makes me feel gentle and protective towards her—except sometimes when it makes me want to take her in hand over my lap straight away for being a naughty little girl!

When J looks at me in a childlike way, she seems so little, vulnerable, in need of protection, love and care. It is an expression of vulnerability and trust in me. She is trusting me to look after her, and that feels good to me.

There is a lot more to J than this, of course. She is an adult, and a very competent, strong one at that—I must emphasise that this is just one facet of a wonderfully complex character that I love. That said, I'm glad that she feels able to show different facets of her personality with me. It makes life far more interesting.

I'm not sure why J's childlikeness has such a powerful effect on me (maybe someone will write in about this?) but perhaps the vulnerability

and trust it implies appeals to the protective man in me? It does make me feel very aware of the fact that I am a man, a real man, and responsible for caring for the woman I love so much.¹⁴²

"WHAT THE WOMAN GETS OUT OF IT" (23 JANUARY 2004)

I am J, the woman lucky enough to be loved by Random, and as Random has received criticism on another forum, I wanted to say what I myself get out of our relationship.

First, be aware that it was I myself who asked Random to take me in hand. He is such a kind, considerate man that from what I know of him, his previous relationships have not involved this to any great degree, because his attitude is always to do whatever it takes to make the woman he is with happy. Well I knew what I wanted, and I told him, and he listened and we talked and talked, and we found that this was not just something he could give me but something he loves as much as I do.

I'll never forget the first time he took me in hand physically. We were in a car park, and I had made an adverse comment about myself. The smile on his face changed to a look of concern and loving dominance, and he ordered me to turn around so he could spank me.

That was the moment I knew he wasn't just doing all this for me. That was the moment I realised that he gets it, that he's wired for dominance. I felt such pleasure I can't even describe it. I felt high, flying,

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wrapped in protective love, cared for. I felt a sense of deep gratitude, not because I have a spanking fetish (to be honest, I'm not that interested in the spanking aspect of being taken in hand) but because he cared about me putting myself down, and because he gave me the gift of his dominant love which feels so good.

Other couples have love and caring too, and express it in other ways, but this is the way I personally prefer. When Random expresses his love in non-BDSM dominant ways, it makes me feel excited, loved, protected, and submissive. I hate to admit that I love to feel submissive, because I'm not the submissive type, but I do have to admit that I love dominance because of the way it makes me feel—as though I'm floating on air, safe in his care, and well, I'm sexually wired to be excited by it.

There seems to be a big misconception that Random just likes to get his own way and not consider my desires. This is so untrue! I've never met a more considerate man. I've had a couple of very nice boyfriends but I've never met a man more caring and willing to listen than Random. Sometimes I feel moved to tears by how kind he is. This is no selfish man who feels free to walk all over me, this is a man with the kindest heart on earth, a man with the strength and love not to be diminished by pleasing those he loves.

What do I get out of it? The deepest love I've ever known, a heightened sense of pleasure and happiness in my life, a feeling of erotic excitement a lot more of the time than I'd have with a non-dominant

man, and a level of intimacy that makes other relationships pale into nothing. I can tell Random my deepest secrets, fears, problems, and all the good and positive things too, and he listens and helps. He's my rock, my support, my lover, my soulmate.

Random said that this relationship makes him feel free. It makes me too feel free—free as a bird, flying, gliding on warmth, enjoying the sunshine. It's like waking up and going out into the warm sunshine and smelling clean country air after spending time in a cold dark musty building. I've never felt more loved or more free than I do with Random.

For posters to say I must be sublimating my desires and building up resentment towards him is all wrong. Nothing could be further from the truth. This is what I've always wanted! Finally, I've got what I always wanted. It doesn't get any better than this. This is my fairytale dream come true. If you think being taken in hand means the man gets what he wants and the woman gets walked on, you just don't get it. Believe me, I couldn't be happier!¹⁴³

"SPANKING AS CONNECTION" (25 JANUARY 2004)

As I've explored the wonderful worlds of spanking, dominance and submission and domestic discipline, and how they relate to what I most truly need and desire, how they relate to my truest nature, I've been privileged to learn so much. I've learned (and God bless those for whom this is what makes them hap-

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py) that true sadomasochism has essentially no interest for me. I've learned that I have no interest in hurting women (nor men, either) for any reason, but appreciate the value for the kind of women I find myself deeply attracted to of being taken care of, and that being taken in hand is for them a part of that. I've learned that I have a parental and nurturing masculine streak a mile wide that runs deep through my dominant nature and is a part of myself that I deeply cherish. I've learned that I adore spanking girls' bottoms for our mutual pleasure and have a natural talent for doing just that. I've learned that I value the code of the gentleman in all aspects of my life and that the way I grow in relationships is by being a strong, dominant partner in the service of my beloved's truest, deepest needs.

And I have encountered this truth—everyone has their own true nature and desires, and although there are certain universal truths about human beings (none of us desire to truly suffer, all of us desire to be happy—no matter how twisted or misguided that may become for some of us at times), and certain overlapping interests for a particular group (some men and women just are naturally and lovingly dominant, some naturally and joyfully submissive, many have no such polarity or are genuinely switchable), each of has his or her own particular nature, our own deepest truth, which is uniquely our own.

We may or may not wish to face this nature and explore it, and any given society may condemn and revile a particular kind of tempera-

ment or relational style while another society rewards and encourages it. But ultimately our own real chance at happiness is this life is to learn what our true nature is and follow it in the best and most honest way we know how, trusting that it is, in essence, a gift in the deepest sense. What I have come to see is that what is most important is to learn as much as possible about what you truly need and desire, regardless of your own internal critic and regardless of societal applause or condemnation, and then follow it to the very best of our abilities, while being respectful of those we interact with and respectful of their own natures and needs.

And so sometimes along my own path, I have met with some misunderstanding or disapproval (although, I must say, the more I come to understand and accept my own nature, the less I encounter either) or am bothered by them when I do. One of the key misunderstandings I have encountered from either "vanilla" friends or, on the other hand, those in the true BDSM culture is this: If you enjoy spanking and your girl enjoys being spanked, how can you say that it is also used as discipline in your relationship? And if you wish to discipline her, shouldn't you withhold spanking, or do something else entirely?

To answer the second question first: No way. Spanking is an important part of how I express connection and intimacy with my beloved (and how she experiences both), and she has my unconditional love and adoration no matter how she behaves. I would never choose

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to use the withdrawal of affection or isolation as punishment for any child of mine. I might spank them or give them a "community service" style project, which replaces a Saturday night with friends or an expected trip to the movies, but I would never leave them alone as I feel that would be truly harmful to their hearts. I would make sure that they understood that discipline is provided for them simply to change particular behavior that is disrespectful or potentially harmful to them or others, not to change them for being "bad" (or as I like to say "A naughty girl is just a good girl before she's had her spanking").

Spanking in my adult relationship works the same way. No matter how far my sweetie may have erred from her wiser self, no matter what she has done and no matter how I feel about it, our connection will never be at stake because of it. She may be spanked until she sobs and kicks over my knee (only occasionally, only when she has really done something dangerous to herself or others). But my love for her will never be at stake, it is truly unconditional. Even as I convey the very forceful idea that this may be one form of behavior I never wish to see from her in the future, I let her know the strength and depth of my devotion to her and love for her.¹⁴⁴

"THE ESKIMO ANALOGY" (26 JANUARY 2004)

Last time* I talked about physical discipline as a form of connection, one which, when both parties want it in their relationship, is important not to neglect. This still leaves open the question that friends (both those who would never be interested in any kind of domestic discipline and those for whom sex isn't fun until someone's skin's been broken) ask: How can you possibly expect to change anyone's behavior or attitude if you give them what they want when they do the things you least want them to do? This being a very fair question, I've taken time to try to explain my thoughts and feelings on the matter: so let me call this the Eskimo analogy.

[Now let me first of all apologize to both my readers who are actual Eskimos and those who are specialized Eskimologists; I have never traveled in the wild, barren North, nor have I ever dedicated myself to detailed study of Eskimo life. I'm sure many Eskimos are wonderful kissers, and they may in fact have only one word for snow. The Eskimo in my story is a gentleman formed from received wisdom and my own rhetorical needs.]

Suppose an Eskimo was staying with my family here in New York City. After a long, enjoyable day spent walking through some of the world's finest museums and going shopping at Saks Fifth Avenue, we come home to my apartment and he sees me first give my wife a long, lingering kiss on the lips as I greet her and then, later that evening, as I

* "Spanking as connection," 25 January 2003.

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tuck my children in, kiss each of them on the forehead.

As we are talking over beers in the living room that night, he turns to me and says:

"Max, my friend, I've had a wonderful time here in your city, but there's something I'd have to confess I don't understand, because in my country we do not have this "kissing" that you Southerners seem to enjoy so much.

"Now what I don't understand is this: When you came home, you kissed your wife and it seemed as though it was a very sexual thing between you, which makes perfect sense to me. But then you kissed your children before they went to sleep. Now is it normal for your people to express sexual attraction to their children—or is there something I'm missing here, Max my friend?"

To which I of course offer the following explanation: A kiss can express a lot of different sentiments and create a lot of different feelings for both kisser and kissee.

A kiss on the lips is different from a kiss on the forehead, which is different from a kiss on the back of the hand, which in turn expresses something rather different than a kiss on the palm, or a kiss on the cheek, a kiss on the neck, a kiss on the toes or a kiss on the inner thighs... Something as seemingly simple as touching lips to another person's skin can be incredibly complex in its meaning and one kiss can be entirely different from another. A kiss can express (and generate) intense sexual attraction, it can convey parental or filial blessing, it can be a simple way of greeting anyone towards whom you

feel goodwill, it can be an expression of gentlemanly deference and respect, it can be seductive or entirely chaste. It can even have political or social implications (a kiss on the ring) or be the ultimate betrayal of a religious leader.

And so it is with spanking: a simple action requiring only the application of one's hand (or an implement) to another person's buttocks.

Spanking can be entirely erotic, either as foreplay or as a form of sex in itself, but it can also be utterly asexual—often for me it is somewhere in between being purely erotic and utterly chaste. It can be entirely disciplinary—an intimate and ritualistic form of safely, but firmly and physically, expressing displeasure with a particular action or attitude. It can be deeply sensual without being sexual; combined with other forms of stroking, a spanking on the bare can be a wonderful form of relaxing massage. It can be part of a playful game, or a way of de-stressing a beloved partner after she's had a difficult day at work. It can be an entirely non-disciplinary way of providing emotional release for a cherished one who is going through genuine difficulty and cannot find easy release of her feelings in another way. It can be a form of light-hearted flirtation, but it can also be a way of affirming and deepening a life-time commitment to a romantic partner. It can even, apparently, be a form of spiritual practice (perhaps not one accepted by any religious orthodoxy, but still...) in the form of Tantric spanking.

"And so, my Eskimo friend," I would say, leaning forwards with

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purpose, "Just as you have your 200 words for the different kinds of snow you see, which to us just looks like so many white frozen flakes, so we have over 200 different kinds of kiss."

And so I could say the same about spanking—what appears to be a simple physical interaction can convey a far greater number of meanings than someone on the outside might ever guess.¹⁴⁵

"**SECRETARY: THE FILM**" (29 JANUARY 2004)

Secretary was recommended to me as a "very sexy" film for those with Taken In Hand inclinations. But one Taken In Hand person I talked to vehemently disagreed, saying, "This movie is an insult! It implies we're sickos, and it was obviously made by people who have no idea what we're about. The humiliation in it was offensive. I'd tell him where to stick the garbage." I decided to see it for myself.

If you watch it hoping for a film about Taken In Hand relationships, you will probably be a bit disappointed. For a start, there are some scenes which have the appearance of humiliating BDSM-style tests of submission.

Secondly, early in the film, we learn that the main female character, Lee, has a compulsion to cut and burn herself—yuck! The first time I watched the film, both she and the main male character, Mr Grey, struck me as weak and screwed up. In accepting humiliating tests of submission such as going through

the industrial-sized dustbin to find a document, Lee seemed like a bit of a doormat. And far from being calm, gentlemanly, and strong, Mr Grey seemed disrespectful and short-tempered. My initial impression was not that good.

However, as I discovered, there is another way to watch this film, one that makes it well worth watching. Once I stopped expecting to identify closely with the two main characters, and relaxed about the BDSM humiliation and tests of submission, I started seeing lots of valuable aspects of the film, and would now recommend it.

I see it as a story of redemption. Here are two individuals so screwed up that one wonders how they will ever find happiness in their lives... and by the end of the film, they have clearly found deep happiness and contentment in a rich, fulfilling relationship with each other.

Moreover, this happiness is not pulled out of a hat, it is the result of what they themselves want (dominance and submission) and the actions they themselves take. That is a terrifically positive message about the power of this sort of relationship to help people solve their apparently intractable problems.

It is quite clear that no matter how weak and troubled Lee was at the beginning of the film, by the time of her sit-in, she is very strong indeed. Instead of being angry with Mr Grey for needing to test her love and submission, she calmly, resolutely, and proudly submits. Here is a woman so accepting of, and clear about, who she is and what she wants, that even when besieged by

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the media and many people all trying to get her to move, she remains seated as Mr Grey has told her to. It is her single-minded pursuit of the relationship that wins the day.

Mr Grey is, for most of the film, tortured by his dominant desires and fighting them all the way. Whether one is BDSM-inclined or Taken In Hand inclined, I think one can empathise with his inner struggle. Many of us have wrestled with inner doubts about whether what we want is okay. Mr Grey does not accept himself at all – until Lee helps him to do so. At one point, in a voice full of anxiety, he says, “We can’t do this 24/7!” Lee replies with clear-eyed simplicity, “Why not?”

This is not to say that Mr Grey is as useless as he appeared to me upon first viewing. In fact, he is the first person ever to really see and understand Lee. He gives her visibility, and it is he who releases her from her compulsion to mutilate herself. It is this that then enables Lee in turn to help him to accept himself, and without that, there would be no relationship. So each redeems the other.

This film depicts the development of a relationship which empowers each person to grow and flourish, just like any other good relationship. Even if the individuals were as rational as you or I, this would be a positive message; but Lee and Mr Grey initially were both deeply troubled, so, to me, the message is even more positive, because it is that much more difficult to create a good relationship when you have deep psychological problems! We should not be insulted by this film at all!

Upon second viewing I noticed many nice touches: Lee’s response to the spanking (not to mention her checking whether it had left marks on her), her attempts to provoke Mr Grey into spanking her, her response to Mr Grey’s failure to be provoked, her total failure to make herself and her desires understood by her conventional boyfriend, and her total lack of arousal during sex with the conventional boyfriend. All this rings so true.

The relationship that Lee and Mr Grey end up with is warm, very loving, joyful, exquisitely nurturing, and appears to the outside world quite conventional. They are a couple living a perfectly normal life together... which incorporates BDSM. They look just like you and me, rather than appearing weird. They could be your next-door neighbours.

Well worth watching; you just have to watch it in the right spirit.

*If you have seen it, what did you think?*¹⁴⁶

“WHAT KIND OF SITE IS THIS? D/S? TPE? CP? DD? ABCD?” (1 FEBRUARY 2004)

On the page about me,* Mary Lou Day writes:

This is a superb Web Site you’ve created but what is it? You talk about Traditional Relationships, but you say you don’t think it’s Natural and

* See:

<<https://web.archive.org/web/20130128210219/http://www.takeninhand.com/webmaster#comment-466>>

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you're not religious. Is it a DD site? Parts of it look like a Spanko Site. There's a lot of D/s on it, are you D/s? It's confusing because you've said comments against BDSM but the Site could be a TPE one.... except you don't accept the slave/master dynamic. What are you????

The short answer, Mary Lou, is that on a personal level I have a bit of an aversion to being put in a box or given a fixed label, and in terms of the web site, I don't want to get into arguments about words. The idea of having big discussions about whether or not Taken In Hand is a DD site or a D/s site, or both, depending upon what you mean by that, or what the definition of such-and-such a term is... well I'm nodding off in boredom already, just thinking about it. It just doesn't interest me.

However, since this seems to be important to some readers, here are my thoughts on this. I do hope that nothing I say here will offend anyone. (Fear of upsetting people is another reason not to have an explicit discussion of terms, I think!) The last thing I want to do is offend anyone. None of what follows is in any way to criticise anyone else's choices. Each person must follow his or her own path in life, and in no way do I want to suggest that paths other than mine are wrong. I have enough trouble following my own path, never mind sitting in judgement of anyone else's! :-)

Part of the reason that I avoid labels is that I think that the best relationships are those that arise and evolve naturally as a result of the interactions of the two unique indi-

viduals involved. There is no magic formula for relationship success: we have to make our own magic, starting from where we are as individuals, and jointly creating a relationship we both value. A good relationship is a dynamic, evolving entity, not an immutable set of rules. When I imagine being in a relationship that is stereotypical, static, and easy to label, my reaction is: what's the point? Perhaps others understand things better than I do, but to me, it sounds mindless, boring, unchallenging, tedious, unsatisfying.

When I first became interested in the idea of what I now call Taken In Hand relationships—or rather, when I first faced the fact that such a relationship was what I wanted—I had not read anything or talked to anyone about it. So it is not really surprising that I do not think in terms of labels such as “domestic discipline” or “D/s”. Why suddenly attach a label to a set of ideas that has taken shape and evolved in my mind long before I had ever heard of those labels/“lifestyles”? (I personally don't even like the idea of a “lifestyle”, because that, to me, sounds somehow artificial, fixed and clearly defined.) I have no objection to others attaching any label they find helpful to Taken In Hand, I just don't feel inclined to pin it down myself.

My aim in starting this site was to create a new kind of site—not a standard relationship site on which it is completely taken for granted that to have a good relationship, husband and wife must be equal and *seen to be equal* (whether they like it or not)—and on the other

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hand, not a standard traditional site on which it is taken for granted that the wife should submit to her husband—but also not a BDSM / D/s / SM sex site (which all leave me personally completely cold, if not queasy). I wanted my site to be free of the cliquey language, embarrassing rituals and modes of address and the surprisingly narrow thinking one finds on some D/s and BDSM sites; and as a non-spanko, I wanted a site that would also not be a DD/spanking site.

I wanted the site to be free of posts advocating self-serving narcissism. I wanted the site not to be irresponsible. I wanted the site to do no harm. We stress that the husband in a Taken In Hand relationship *puts his wife and their relationship first* because that is the key to creating a marriage in which the man is in control in a good, healthy and sustainable way.

I imagined a site on which lovers of books like Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead* or *Atlas Shrugged* would have deep philosophical discussions with lovers of Jane Austen's novels, and where men who appreciate *Doesn't Anyone Blush Anymore?*, by Manis Friedman would happily rub shoulders with women who love books like Helen Andelin's *Fascinating Womanhood* and Laura Doyle's *The Surrendered Wife*.

I hoped to create a positive, warm site that would be neither anti-men nor anti-women.

I wanted to create a site that, while being firmly focused on relationships in which the husband wears the trousers in the relationship, was not hostile to other paths. The idea

of Taken In Hand as a prescription for all is against everything I believe in. This is a free *choice*, or it would be an abomination. Taken In Hand is not compulsory! Whilst I wanted my site to focus on Taken In Hand relationships, that is just because that is my personal preference. I was not trying to create a huge site catering to all preferences, but that does not mean I think everyone should share my preferences.

I wanted the site to be supportive of lifelong, fully committed, sexually exclusive, faithful marriage, by showing that monogamy need not mean monotony but in fact can be much more exciting and sexually fulfilling than less focused (e.g., open or poly) relationships, staying single or having adulterous affairs.

I wanted the site to foster non-stereotypical, evolving, exciting unlabelled relationships in which the spouses do not feel trapped in ill-fitting role boxes. I wanted to provide a forum on which women would feel free to be themselves rather than trying to squeeze themselves into a rigid stereotypical D/s-style 'submissive' box, and where men would not feel pressure to put on a ridiculous swaggering stereotypical 'dom' act.

Taken In Hand wives respect, honour and appreciate their husbands and strive to please them, but they tend not to claim to be submissive, because they do not feel the deep need to serve that so many believe is the essence of submissiveness. I don't believe that there is any *duty* to submit, any more than there is a *duty* to be in charge. For me these matters are

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individual preferences, not duties or burdens to suffer.

There are many many sites out there for women who have a very deep desire to serve, and many others for those who choose to submit to their husbands for religious reasons. But until I started this site, there was no site for those women who worship the man who actively masters them and *submits* them but who otherwise don't feel submissive, and there was no site for men who enjoy the thrill of actively *dominating* and *submitting* their wife and who would find it boring to be in a relationship without at least a little of that.

I wanted it to be clear that the purpose of creating a Taken In Hand relationship is that, for those of us who like this sort of thing, it creates a white-hot sexual connection, and thus a rock-solid permanent bond between husband and wife. I wanted it to be obvious that if the Taken In Hand idea is not your cup of tea, it is not for you!

The Taken In Hand relationship is neither all about the man, as in some D/s relationships in which the man has control, nor all about the woman, as in some DD relationships—it is for both. I wanted that to be very clear on my site.

I wanted to create a thoughtful site that would be about *ideas*—the *philosophy* and the *psychology* of these relationships, the *underlying substance*—rather than experiences or particular practices. I had in mind a more analytical, deeply interesting (to me) site that would raise and discuss interesting issues that would help people create vibrantly happy

marriages and improve relationships more generally, as opposed to a site that would just have a lot of posts detailing posters' experiences. Sometimes experience posts do raise interesting issues but often they are just experiences. Experience posts also tend to give too much information (for my taste, at least), and the more such posts we have on the site, the more it attracts similar posts.

I wanted my site to be one free of exhibitionism—one on which private information (such as intimate details about what a poster did in the bedroom on a given occasion) would remain private rather than appearing on the site. I wanted my site to appeal as much to readers' parents or grandparents, as to individuals who might also read obviously racy, graphic sites.

I wanted my site to be free of religious proselytising. On the other hand I did not want my site to be hostile to religious people. I wanted it to appeal to Orthodox rabbis and conservative Christians as well as fellow atheists.

I wanted a site that would take it for granted that different men, and indeed couples, have wildly different preferences in regard to how the control can be manifested in a Taken In Hand relationship, rather than being a site that would be dominated by one preference in this regard.

I hoped that readers would be able to see the beautiful substance beneath the overt form of the Taken In Hand relationship in general, and of individual couples' relationships in particular.

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I hoped that people would see this site not as a throwback to darker times when women had no choice, but as an expression of the real choice women (at least Western women) now have. I hoped that this site would give women who have, in psychological terms, had no choice but to choose so-called equality, the psychological freedom to choose a Taken In Hand relationship instead of that miserable (for them) so-called equality. And I hoped that this site would, similarly, make men, too, feel more free to embrace their preference for a Taken In Hand relationship. In no way do I want to make anyone feel compelled to change any preference they might have.

On some sites, there is a snobbishness that I find unappealing. There is a sort of hierarchy of posters, with those not claiming to be 'experienced' being deemed less likely to have good ideas. What nonsense! I wanted my site to be free of posts arguing from authority. I wanted my site to be free of posts talking down to other people.

I wanted my site to be free of meta comments—endless arguments about meta issues such as how to post, how the site should be run, how x's response was judgemental, or y shouldn't have posted in z manner. I hoped that posters would address ideas and issues and not get into uninteresting petty squabbles about what is acceptable behaviour on the site.

Have I achieved my aim? Erm... not yet, not perfectly at least, but nevertheless the site does have its own unique identity, and people seem to be discussing Taken In

Hand relationships—and using my chosen phrase, "Taken In Hand" to do so—all over the internet.

I chose the phrase "taken in hand" to distinguish my site from sites aimed at those who believe that if a woman wants to live under the control of a man, she must be a very obedient, already-in-hand woman with a deep need to serve and obey.

Many D/s 'doms' want to be served and obeyed and would never countenance the idea of *dominating* and *submitting* their woman. Some are positively scathing about the idea. There was no site in existence for those who *do* enjoy dominating and submitting their woman. I wanted my site to be for those men, and the women who love them. The phrase "taken in hand" highlights the activeness of the husband's control, and does not suggest that it is a wife's duty to be already in hand. It suggests the sort of dominance that involves *submitting* the woman, as opposed to the sort of dominance that requires the woman to act as if she has already been submitted by the man despite the fact that she hasn't.

Please do not conclude that I think any man has a duty to dominate and submit his wife. I do not! If submitting your woman is not a thrill for you but instead a disagreeable chore that you find entirely uninteresting, then Taken In Hand is not aimed at you. This is not about fixed prescriptions and proscriptions, it is about individual preferences.

I also like the fact that the phrase "taken in hand" suggests interaction, connection, and movement towards an ever-better relationship.

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This is real life we are dealing with here, not a fantasy, not people acting out roles. In real life, women often would hate to wear the trousers in their relationship, and long for their husband to take charge and not take any nonsense, but unless their husband takes charge and actively gets and keeps the upper hand, by default the women will continue to run things, because that is what they have been doing (painful though it is for them) in the absence of their husband's control.

Likewise, wonderful, loving husbands have tried so hard not to boss their wife about, because they have had it drummed into them from childhood that that was the way to have a good marriage, that it is sometimes difficult for them to take charge (despite how much they hate not to be wearing the trousers). I wanted this site to provide information and respectful support for men trying to take charge in their marriage.

The last thing I wanted was a site in a constant battle about labels instead of discussing more interesting matters.

But let me go through a few quibbles I have with each of the labels the poster asked about, to make it more obvious why I hesitate to use them:

SM (*sadomasochism*)

Many years ago, in my read-all-the-classics phase, I read *Julliette* and *Justine*, by the Marquis de Sade—and wished I hadn't. I also read Anne Rice's *Beauty* series, and was unmoved by them. I have read *Story of O* a couple of times, and that too

does not really speak to me. Also, I have no interest in the whole pain thing. I don't get the appeal of causing pain, or indeed receiving it. I conclude that I am no sadomasochist.

On the other hand, if it is the case that if there is any hint of violence or intensity in a relationship, it counts as sadomasochistic, then I must put myself in that category. I do not think of all (consensual) violence/intensity as being sadomasochism (SM), but apparently others do.

BDSM (*bondage, discipline, dominance, submission, sadomasochism*)

The few things I have read that are aimed at the BDSM community have made me think that BDSM is not for me. It is absolutely not that I have any moral objection to BDSM, it is just not my cup of tea. There is quite a distinct BDSM sub-culture, with its own language and rituals, and quite specific, even stereotypical, ways of interacting (and no, I am not just referring to the internet).

To me, it feels artificial, and there is a certain exhibitionism associated with it, that I find distasteful. Not immoral, just not my cup of tea.

I personally am not interested in the master/slave idea, stylised scenes, the human toilet idea, dungeons, wearing kinky costumes, rubber or leather (except occasionally, for fun, or when attending a fancy-dress party), intricate lists of often rather bizarre rules and consequences, instruments of pain such as nipple clamps, humiliation, play parties, munches, or anything requiring a safeword. The idea of a

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grovelling, obsequious, quivering, submissive woman desperate to serve and willing to be humiliated and punished for the slightest thing leaves me cold. My fantasies don't revolve around masters and slaves, or men shouting at women, or making women eat out of a dog's bowl (whether or not it's been washed).

For me, Taken In Hand is not a mere game to play at a particular time on a particular day, with a set of toys and equipment. Toys and equipment might be fun on occasion but they are not the whole point, and for me it has to be twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. In fact, even to mention that it is 24/7 seems all wrong to me, because it suggests that one could say, this week, let's take a day off. The man's control needs to inform the entire relationship. If it is possible to take the day off, the control simply isn't there for me. It would not feel real. And I want it to *be* real, not just *feel* real.

Of course the husband can choose to give the wife a freer rein on a particular day, and he can rein her in firmly on a particular occasion, but that is not the same as engaging in a BDSM play scene, or having a conventional relationship which is BDSM in the bedroom. Lots of BDSM web sites and books and BDSM folk I have met IRL stress the fact that the relationship is strictly equal/non-dominant in every respect except in the bedroom. That is not for me. In the sense of "equal" they mean, I'm all for a bit of inequality. (It doesn't seem unequal to me in any bad sense, just different.)

D/s (dominance/submission)

Whenever I come across an explicitly D/s person or web site, I find statements that are just not consistent with what I want. I particularly dislike the very serious, dutiful, self-sacrificial, disapproving atmosphere on many D/s sites. For me, if it's not hot for you, why do it?! I wanted my site to avoid the idea of dominance as a burden, submission as a duty, and instead stress that the reason we are doing this is that it is *hot* and *fun* and thereby bonds the couple together in a joyful, happy marriage with a white-hot sexual connection.

I also dislike the custom of using lower case to denote submission and capitalising references to the dominant person: "when i know i have pleased my Master, only then will i be able to feel my own happiness." I personally prefer standard English.

Many D/s sites and individuals I meet seem to emphasise the issue of whether or not a person is Truly Submissive, and whether or not she has jumped through enough hoops to qualify for the label *submissive*. They seem inordinately excited by rituals and what they call 'protocols'. They tend to contain a lot of posts frowning on those who only feel submissive when actively dominated, and by extension, on those who are more into dominating and submitting the woman they love than simply being served.

I also dislike the fact that many D/s sites are very much opposed to the whole idea of love, and sexual exclusivity, and that they do not stress that the dominant partner puts the submissive partner first. On

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many such sites there is an assumption that it is all about the wishes of the dominant partner. Again, I am quite sure that in many D/s relationships there is love and sexual exclusivity, and the dominant partner does indeed put the submissive partner first. I just wanted my own site to *stress* that Taken In Hand is for both as opposed to being all about one.

Moreover, D/s and M/s sites tend to take the view that there are different levels of submissiveness, where to be more submissive is to have a greater desire and ability to *serve*. That whole concept of submissiveness as having a need to serve leaves me cold. Similarly, many D/s sites assume the, to me, very peculiar idea of dominance I mentioned above, namely, dominance without active dominating.

The whole D/s idea seems so very rigid and stereotypical and boring to me, but again, that's just me. To each his own. I make no claim to understand D/s. And no doubt someone with different preferences would feel the same about my preferences.

I prefer the idea of individual men and women exploring their nature fully and freely rather than to try to squeeze themselves into someone else's idea of what they, as a man or a woman, should be. I like the taming idea, the idea of subjection. Where is the fun in being handed submission on a plate? The husband in a Taken In Hand relationship *enjoys* a little challenge now and again, and doesn't hesitate to take his wife in hand when necessary. It is all part of the fun of being in charge in the relationship.

TPE (total power exchange)

Again, I have only recently heard of "TPE" relationships. I like the idea of power *exchange* and have read a few such web sites. As with all these labels, there are elements of the descriptions of TPE relationships that do sound consistent with Taken In Hand. But most of the TPE sites I have found seem to be heavily BDSM-inspired, so are not to my taste. Moreover, I have no interest in collars, tattoos, or piercing or branding, whether in reality or even just in fantasy. This is not a moral judgement, just a difference in preferences.

Taken In Hand can sound boringly conservative and conventional to anyone with a penchant for some of the more elaborate, painful, ritualistic, theatrical, humiliating BDSM practices, but it is hardcore and extreme to anyone who doesn't like the idea of the man's control not being confined to set scenes and times. Perhaps TPE is where Taken In Hand meets BDSM. But given the fact that TPE is part of the BDSM subculture, only a small proportion of Taken In Hand relationships could also be described as TPE.

Spanko

Because of the way my ideas developed, and because of my (very limited) experience of folks who consider themselves "spankos," I don't think of myself as a "spanko." I was interested in what I now call Taken In Hand relationships long before I discovered the existence of the spanking/DD community.

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The husband in a Taken In Hand relationship might or might not use spanking, but either way, it is not the spanking *per se* that is the point, it is the husband's active control of his wife.

My impression is that this is a slightly different emphasis which makes all the difference. To me, spanking *per se* is not erotic, and many Taken In Hand inclined individuals have no interest whatsoever in spanking, whether just for fun or ostensibly for discipline or punishment, so it does seem as though Taken In Hand does not quite fit the mould of a spanko site.

However, one thing I like about the spanko community is their wonderfully vibrant sense of fun. I'd like to see more of this spirit on Taken In Hand actually.

DD (domestic discipline)

Again, I only heard of "DD" relatively recently, and do not think of myself as being DD. But as with all these labels, I am very glad that lots of individuals who think of themselves as "DD" love Taken In Hand.

Different individuals have different ideas about what "DD" means, and I find some of the ideas associated with it questionable. For me, the idea that this is about correcting the bad behaviour of a faulty woman is a mistake. Why would a man want to be with such a woman? I don't get it. For me, the idea that this is about helping a woman who has difficulty functioning as an adult, or saving a woman from herself, or preventing her from harming herself, is unappealing, to say the least.

Just as D/s sites sometimes appear to be all about the dominant partner, so DD sites often appear to be all about the one on the receiving end of the discipline. I wanted my site to be for both, not all about either the man or the woman.

When I first discovered the DD (domestic discipline) community, I was struck by two things: first, the heavy focus on spanking and punishment, to the exclusion of all other forms of control, and especially to the exclusion of more subtle forms of control; secondly, the astounding-ly vehement denial of the erotic aspect of so-called "discipline spankings". Here were people who on the one hand were obsessed with spanking and most certainly finding it erotic or they wouldn't be reading erotic spanking stories and the like... and on the other hand, adamantly denying the connection between that and "real discipline". It is completely inconceivable that there is no link between the two things.

I personally don't really like the DD focus on punishment, and many or most Taken In Hand relationships do not involve physical discipline. You can maintain control in many ways, not least by the power of your personality.

[...]

Another thing I noticed was that lots of DD sites talk about contracts, rules, and fixed punishments for misdemeanours. As with BDSM sites, it all sounds too fixed for me, too stereotypical, too static and boring, not individual enough. (Sorry! I do not mean to suggest that others should find BDSM or DD boring, merely that I do.) A relationship

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must be evolving to continue to be fulfilling in the long term, and it must also be unique to the two individuals involved.

Surrendered wives, old-fashioned girls, the man as strong romantic hero who ravishes the heroine

I am delighted that many readers have discovered *Taken In Hand* after reading Jane Austen, modern romance novels, Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*, Laura Doyle's *The Surrendered Wife*, Helen Andelin's *Fascinating Womanhood*, and other such books. Elements of the ideas in these books appeal to me greatly, but I am not very keen on the "surrendered wife" label, and in the case of the latter two books, the men sound decidedly hypersensitive and weak. Apart from the phrase, "surrendered wife", the only other I have thought of here is "being a man", and as a reader quite rightly pointed out to me, using that phrase might suggest that one thinks that men who have no wish to take charge in their marriage are not real men, which of course is not true.

Traditional Relationship

In the past I have said that *Taken In Hand* is about celebrating "traditional relationships" but this has caused no end of misunderstandings and offence, so I conclude that using this phrase is a mistake, though it still has some appeal for me, because these relationships do have something in common with traditional relationships, except that the *Taken In Hand* one is freely chosen and thoroughly consensual.

But for some readers, the phrase "traditional relationship" conjures up the idea of tyrannical men and uninteresting docile miserable resentful nothing women devoid of autonomy and having no choice and no opportunities to pursue their own dreams. So to use this phrase risks giving the mistaken impression that *Taken In Hand* is advocating a return to the Dark Ages when there was no choice for women. On the contrary, I think that unless this is a genuine choice, it is thoroughly bad. Indeed, one of my criticisms of some strands of feminism is that they end up replacing one set of prescriptions and proscriptions with another. I think individuals should be free to pursue relationships and ways of life that they themselves prefer, not feel compelled to follow someone else's prescriptions. Moreover, to some, a "traditional relationship" sounds like a static, fixed relationship, and that description seems not to be a good fit for the kind of *Taken In Hand* relationship a tough woman who has been on the front lines in Iraq might prefer. Nor does that idea work for people like Eric.* So the phrase "traditional relationship" is all wrong.

As you can see, I am at a bit of a loss to know what labels to use to describe *Taken In Hand*, but perhaps the person who has put it best is Ben Nathan, who writes:

I really believe your success is because *Taken In Hand* is about human

* "The resistant woman," 20 September 2003.

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love with bits of all the other bits (spanking / TPE etc) thrown in.

In this comment,* he adds:

This site is about very traditional relationships (like marriage/ monogamy), it is not about religion (though it does seem to follow the Judaeo-Christian ethic of love), it is about domestic discipline (who has not, man or woman, mentally or physically disciplined their lover), it is a 'spanko site' (because some of us spank or whip), it is D/s (because some of us use D/s methods), it is BDSM (because, if we are honest, we all love to be tied down and 'taken'), it is TPE (because we all exchange huge amounts of power when we give ourselves to each other)... we all incorporate PART of all these systems (and many, many others) into that great and gorgeous brew we call love—with marriage, partnership, care, freedom, equality, the kids.. everything all gets mixed in.

Clearly I can't speak for the site owner—whether or not he or she is into D/s or heavily into TPE or whatever... but since he or she appears to be a very human being, he or she is, presumably just like the rest of us... taking whatever he or she needs from wherever to be a unique human being... just like the rest of us.

Thanks Ben. I agree.¹⁴⁷

"WHAT DOES THE MAN GET OUT OF IT? MANY THINGS!" (3 FEBRUARY 2004)

I have previously writtent about the feeling of freedom that a Taken

In Hand style relationship gives me, and I have also explained that I prefer strong† but very feminine§ women. But there is so much more I get out of it than just these things!

First, there is *self respect*. I get a strong feeling that I am doing something worthwhile. I have been brought up to believe that looking after, protecting, and supporting a woman is the role of a man, and when I am dominant, I think I am living up to that ideal, I feel as a man should feel. I have an image of what a man should be, and when I am in charge in the right way (kindly and considerately, needless to say),

I am that man, and that feels good.

I feel very protective towards my girlfriend, J. I know I can't protect her from everything in this world, but when something painful happens to her, I feel as though I have failed. When I succeed in protecting her, I feel validated almost, powerful and vindicated.

As I have said before, *this relationship makes me feel free*. I am in charge, J knows I am in charge, and I can do what I want. But at the same time, I have a responsibility to look after her and to make decisions for her and to nurture the relationship. The fact that she has chosen to be with me puts voluntary constraints around that freedom of choice. For example, I could spank J any time I

† "What's in it for the man? Freedom!" 10 January 2004.

‡ "Why I, a dominant man, prefer a strong woman," 5 January 2004.

§ "The appeal of a very feminine woman," 7 January 2004.

* See: <<https://web.archive.org/web/20130128224338/http://www.takeninhand.com/comment/487#comment-487>>

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want to. On occasion, that can be fun, but I often choose not to do that because of what I want and what J wants.

Next, there's the *erotic benefit*. Being in this kind of relationship is hot as hell. One of the first things J said to me once we got together was that she wants me to feel I can take her whenever I want without exception. When she said this, the sheer eroticism of it sent a shiver down my spine. Here was a strong, successful woman who loves and trusts me so much that she wants to be completely available to me sexually. When I'm in bed with J, knowing that if I wanted to take her that night, she would have "no choice" but to accept, and that I could do anything I wanted to, I feel hugely powerful.

Knowing that J is available to me at any time of the day or night, in any situation, at any time, is very erotic for me. I don't actually have to go around taking her in all situations, and I don't. I exercise (some!) restraint. Just knowing that I can, and that she accepts that and wants to give me that level of availability and trust turns me on and makes me feel good and reinforces my ego and feeling of power. When I feel powerful, J herself finds that erotic, and it makes her feel submissive, and that turns me on even more.

I have said that I derive exquisite pleasure from J's childlikeness because it is an expression of vulnerability and trust in me. When J looks at me with her innocent little girl look, I am instantly turned on and instantly want to take her over my knee. It is fun and arousing to have a woman who is not always a

grown-up adult being serious and mature. So J's childlikeness and playfulness brings a lot of *light-hearted fun* into our relationship and my life.

Trust is the next benefit on my list. That J has total trust in me means so much to me. She knows that if I give my word, I will keep it. She knows that I can be trusted with blanket consent. The degree of trust she has, in placing herself in my hands (literally!) makes me feel ten feet tall. Someone has absolute faith in me. It makes me feel high, in fact. When I told J it makes me feel ten feet tall, she said, "You are!" I replied, "Only with you. Normally I'm 6'3".

Trust is the bedrock of our relationship, but there is also *mutual respect*. I respect J and what she wants, and she respects my needs too, and accepts that I make the decisions for both of us. It is a meeting of equals but with different roles. I never overrule J without first listening to her perspective, but if I feel that we would benefit from a decision other than the one she wants, I will (and have) made a decision that she did not agree with. I am *always* very careful in this area — if J ever felt that I took her for granted, that would seriously harm our relationship. But to anyone reading this who concludes that I must be a monster, please note that it was J who asked for a Taken In Hand style relationship. This is what she herself wants. So in a sense, I am not really going against her wishes at all. It is entirely consensual non-consent.

There is a serious *ego boost* for me in this relationship. It is incredibly flattering to have a woman trust me

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enough to place herself in my hands. When she rolls over or demurely bats her eyelids, playfully accepting that I am in charge and submitting to my control, my ego expands considerably. I have this feeling that I have something so valuable, so special. I have a woman, a real woman, who wants me, and who submits to me and to nobody else. If anyone else wants to touch her, look at her, harm her, they have to come through me first.

I feel as though J belongs to me, that in a sense I own her, that she is mine. This *feeling of ownership or possession* (it goes hand-in-hand with the feeling of power and authority and control, etc.) is very erotic. Of course I don't actually think I own J—I have the deepest respect for her, and I don't want a slave! What I am talking about is an emotional feeling rather than a role-playing master-slave game. I in turn belong to J: it goes both ways.

That J has given herself to me completely, given me blanket consent to make the decisions, and that she submits to me and me alone, makes me feel that I have something no one else does. It feels so good. Taking J to a restaurant, letting others see J, and knowing that they are jealous and can't come anywhere near her, that she belongs to me and me alone, makes me *feel like a winner*—the only winner that matters.

I have a huge *feeling of success*. This is part of the competitiveness of being a man. (Am I giving away too many male secrets here? I'm trying to be very frank.) We men feel competitive, and having J makes me feel like the ultimate winner. It is proba-

bly something to do with the testosterone poisoning. ;-) This relationship feels like a whole new level of success, because of the enormous trust J has, and the lack of constraints she places on me. This is such a change from previous relationships, which while good in many ways, never gave me the feeling of freedom to act and this intense feeling of success I get in this relationship with J. My previous relationships were not Taken In Hand ones.

I hope this answers the questions female readers have about what the man gets out of this kind of relationship. Now it's your turn, ladies. What do *you* get out of it?¹⁴⁸

"DO YOU THINK HE DOESN'T HAVE IT IN HIM?" (4 FEBRUARY 2004)

Melanie surrenders: Although I've been thinking about this for a long time, reading Random's last piece* inspired me to take the plunge, to have faith in the magic.

The story: A young woman had been on her own for many years, supported herself, put herself through college, and started a business. She fell in love with an even younger man who still lived at home, and they got married. It made sense, didn't it, for her to keep doing what she'd been doing all those years—paying the bills, earning the money, running the business? She was experienced, he wasn't. The

* "What does the man get out of it? Many things!" 3 February 2003.

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trouble was, he never had a chance to develop those skills because they weren't necessary.

Ten years later, he still has very little experience supporting his family and managing his home. He has turned his formidable intelligence to important projects outside the home, projects to make the world a better place. His wife is exhausted. But she figures he's doing important stuff that only he can do, and perhaps it's her place to take care of everything at home so he can devote his time and energy to making the world better. The world, after all, is more important than just their family, isn't it? But she feels that something is missing from their marriage and their family, and wishes it could be different.

What's missing is that while he's a "big guy" out there in the world, he's not a "big guy" in his own home. He's not really necessary in his home. So he feels important only when he's out there working on his projects, and less important when he's home with his family. His wife respects and admires him for what he does, but she feels let down as a wife. She resents all the stuff she has to do, all the big decisions she has to make. She longs to be cherished and taken care of. But she wonders if it's fair to ask him to take her burdens. She wonders if he's even capable of it.

Well, one day she does ask him. She tells him that she wants him to be the "big guy" in their marriage, their family, their home. Months ago she told him that she wanted him to be in charge, to be stronger than her, to discipline her if necessary. He

agreed and he liked it. But now she wants him to run the business and manage the finances. She acknowledges that she had never given him a chance to grow up in this particular direction, and that he might make mistakes, but probably not worse than the mistakes she had made herself. She wants him to be captain of the ship, while she concentrates on giving him a happy, well-ordered home. She wants to trust him completely, to demonstrate her faith in him by giving him this power, by actually needing him.

She is afraid this will sound like a lot of burden and responsibility to him. But no. He starts talking about the details as if it's a done deal. As if he's wanted this burden and responsibility all his life. In spite of his important work, he's always felt an emptiness at home. Like it wasn't really his house. Like his wife didn't really need him. Like his authority wasn't real because his wife made all the financial decisions. Right before her astonished eyes, he grows about ten inches. He tells her that as of today, he's in charge, and if she bitches and moans about his decisions she'll be soundly spanked.

Perhaps, as he's just grown 10 inches, he might just be able to handle it all.¹⁴⁹

"EVER-DEEPENING TOTAL LOVE" (5 FEBRUARY 2004)

I first found Taken In Hand last Autumn, and after a longer search realised that at last I had found a site that dealt with the complexities of male/female love in an adult way –

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and not in an “adult”, in-your-face, “See some porn pictures? Only \$2.95 for three days!” way.

How was it that I was searching anyway? We need to go back to 1968. I was already a rapidly rising senior physician and needed a new secretary. Like many of us in the 1960s and certainly if one worked closely with armies of beautiful girls (young female doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, secretaries and so on) lots of sex and also a great deal of tender love were there for the asking.

I own up, I had been there, had multiple affairs, loved many women and, maybe, broken lots of hearts.

Then, when I was 28, this young, totally unaffected, gorgeous eighteen-year-old, fresh out of secretarial college came for an interview and took the job on offer. After a while I dropped my existing girlfriend and started to show an interest in, I will call her, M.

M, as she told me years later, was so pleased that her boss had begun to notice her. At first I occasionally took her to lunch to get to know her better, and eventually started dating her. She introduced me to serious hiking and mountain walking (something that over the years has grown and grown—eventually our children were walking long distances with their own walking boots at about three or four—M and I have trekked in the Himalayas, in the Catalan Pyrenees, in the Bavarian Alps and pretty well anywhere a good set of legs can carry a human). How I loved this girl ten years younger than I. She remained a virgin until we married in church just

after her 20th birthday—and a lump still comes to my throat over 33 years after our wedding with the memory of this glorious girl/woman, with her golden hair crafted on to the top of her head, walking down the aisle towards me.

This was really a marriage made in heaven. I had suggested to her perhaps six months after she became my secretary that she was wasted doing that job, and how about college and a degree? So when we married I had not only gorgeous young wife I also had an undergraduate at that. Fortunately she was able to live at home while working for her degree.

Eventually, we wanted children. The first two pregnancies ended in miscarriages. Though as a doctor I had seen many miscarriages, I had never seen *and felt* the unbelievable loss that we both went through each time. Time passed and we healed and our first son, who bears one of my pen names, was born. He bears the same genes as my great aunt who died of cholera in WW1 while my grandfather, an ordinary London East-end Cockney, was fighting at the front—driving ammunition wagons. My grandfather, as a common soldier, was not allowed home for the death of his beloved “Rosie” and as an old man in the 1960s I remember him still treasuring a lock of hair taken from her dead head... gorgeously auburn-red hair just like that of our first son, now 28 and a rising star in the production of historical television programmes.

Son number two, now 26 and down from university, is engaged to the most loving girl he could ever

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have found, a Spanish lawyer, who came to England to learn our brand of the mother tongue.

When M was bringing up the children she wanted to stay at home and did until the younger was about 11. During this time she set up and ran a highly successful and novel food business. This she sold when she wanted to take up her profession again.

M has always been successful, whatever she has done—whether bringing up children, loving her garden, walking, cycling, camping, her profession. This young beauty is now 53 and, as I said in an earlier posting, passes easily for a 35 year old (no surgery, no fancy make-up, just my M).

Fast forwarding over the years... As I said in my previous article,* after erotic “sex slave” games, and after she had read *The Surrendered Wife*, by Laura Doyle, M asked to become my slave. We had always had a totally equal relationship and we had loved our sex-life and had a huge range in our glorious fantasy sex-life, so the sex-slave game was nothing new. Asking to be my slave was.

Of course I accepted but said we should explore it slowly, first as a game. It very soon became obvious that this was not a game but something very real. something for every hour of every day. Something, I suspect, that I had never noticed before... that this highly intelligent, beautiful woman, whom I adored and worshipped and in many ways

had always been in awe of, actually had been wanting to submit totally to her man.

I searched the web... the submissive sites, the BDSM sites, the D/s sites and on and on, but I could not find what M was. Of course she was and wanted to be and is my total slave. Except in public, she is not now known by her Christian name; she has her own name that she herself chose, and which I will not repeat here because it is her private name with me. Similarly my own Christian name, which is not actually Ben or Nathan, is not used between us; she calls me her master.

Since M became my slave, our learning curve has been like an F16 going skywards, climbing exceedingly fast. Clotos, as she appears on this site (and Clotos is another of her names with a special meaning to us) and I made a contract about our new relationship and it has grown and grown; it deepens daily. Neither of us could have ever have believed that a 53 year old woman and a 63 year old man could love like we do.

A love and an ownership of each other that just goes on deepening. Though legally still my wife, Clotos (who is perfectly sane and as normal as a human could ever be) is no longer my wife, except for ceremonial reasons, and I am not her husband: at her wish I am her master.

Not only is she my total slave and I her total master, I am her total slave and she my total mistress. I care for everything about her... her health, the shopping, cooking, washing, ironing, and all the bills. In her own right she is financially quite wealthy but she now owns nothing.

* “Surrendered in love,” 19 November 2003.

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I give her a generous allowance which she may do what she wants with but I am trusted with absolutely everything else to look after.

It is about total trust and total love.

It is about understanding the paradox of the totally owned, yet totally free, slave who loves her owner and master and in turn owns and has enslaved him and is his mistress (something we have discovered together progressively since the early part of 2002).

Why have multiple lovers and lots of different sex games when you are with the person who knows all those different lovers within herself and within her partner and also all the games (and yet more), after years of being together? Anyone who needs help might try the books by Nancy Friday.

Perhaps the closest model of our love is still that which we repeated in our marriage vows in 1970. Although we did not use the word "obey", Clotos knows now that she will only gain the deeper and deeper insights of our gorgeous better love if she follows three simple rules in regard to her enslavement to me: care, love, and obedience, rules which I follow in my enslavement to her.

If you want to call this TPE, fine, D/s, fine, BDSM, fine... but it just doesn't seem to be any of that. What we have is *ours* and I can only hope that anyone reading this will not just laugh and think, "What a couple of nutters" but instead, will try risking such an exploration in their own life. Why not try, as Clotos very bravely did, giving yourself, totally, with no holding back—and it takes time and

many setbacks—to your lover. If you too offer yourself to be owned and enslaved, you might find, as Clotos has, that your shackles do not become tighter. You might find that, surprisingly, they disappear altogether.¹⁵⁰

"ABOUT SCHMIDT: CHOOSE ENGAGEMENT, NOT WITHDRAWAL" (5 FEBRUARY 2004)

The recent discussion of the film, *Secretary*, for some strange reason reminded me of another, albeit very different film, *About Schmidt*. In it, Jack Nicholson portrays the recently retired Warren Schmidt who is left with nothing but time on his hands. The film's opening scenes show him suffering through a meaningless retirement dinner. His relationship with his wife Helen is nothing more than one of duty and obligation.

Upon his retirement he and his wife decide to go on a trip in a Winnebago. For Warren this is not a journey of self-discovery because after 40 years of an empty marriage and meaningless work there is no one to find. It is not even a matter of curiosity about what is around the next bend. His only reason for going on this trip is because there is nothing else to do. When his wife suddenly dies Warren is astonished and bereft, not at his loss, but that he had so little to lose.

It was Thoreau who famously observed, "the mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation." Schmidt is such a man. Most of the movie follows Warren through a series of misadventures as he rather weakly

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tries to build a relationship with his soon-to-be-married daughter. At this point in her life she is unwilling even to try to fix their damaged relationship. She has given up on their relationship because she has come to expect from him nothing more than disappointment.

Even more pathetically, he “adopts” a six-year-old African child through a world children's charity organization. In his letters to this child, who probably can't read them or understand the angst of a middle class American, he spills out his fears and discontent. What is so pitiful is that this non-relationship must substitute for a real one.

Even though this film is meant to be a comedy, *About Schmidt* is essentially a portrait of a man without qualities, baffled by the emotions and needs of others. Although there are some funny moments, the film is at heart tragic.

So what does this have to do with *Taken In Hand*? I have come to understand that, not unlike the characters in *Secretary*, many of us are striving to live a life with intent. Perhaps we have been wounded by the vagaries of life too. What we hope to discover about ourselves and within our relationships may in some ways be unconventional. Of course, one could rightfully ask what is conventional—a life like Schmidt's? Whatever we call our relationship style, it is about engaging our partner in a relationship that is alive and that matters. It is about finding within our selves a depth that has gone untapped.

As we have grown older, my wife and I have come to discover and

appreciate our true selves. She revels in my masculine nature and I revel in her feminine nature. Our relative inequality—my being dominant and her being submissive—allows us to experience a passion and romance unlike any I have ever experienced. As we have explored this side of ourselves we have come to what feels like to us a very natural way of being together.

The one thing that struck me about this movie was that Schmidt could very well be me. It is oh so easy to withdraw from the relationship. I did that very thing in my first failed marriage. I intend to not make the same mistake again. I believe marriage is our most important relationship. If it is not good, then everything else suffers—our work, our family, and our outlook on life. I believe that men must take the lead and commit themselves to their marriages. It is amazing to discover how a woman will respond if the man takes the lead and remains actively involved in the relationship. I have discovered the truth of this for myself.

In his allegorical novel *The Great Divorce*, C.S. Lewis argues that people make their own hell. It is not what God has done to you, but what you have chosen for yourself. The novel depicts hell as something we create by separating ourselves from relationship and community. We choose withdrawal instead of engagement. Schmidt's empty life, devoid of real relationships, is a living hell of his own making.¹⁵¹

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"THE SURRENDERED WIFE, BY LAURA DOYLE: A CRITIQUE" (9 FEBRUARY 2004)

Although our level of intimacy is similar and length of marriage is analogous to that described by Ben, my wife knew before we married that she needed a man to take her in hand.

Ben's reference to Laura Doyle's *The Surrendered Wife* caught my attention because closet feminists sometimes claim Doyle's surrendered wife to never be in need of spanking—a subject which Doyle conveniently avoids.

Moreover, I find Doyle's version of the surrendered wife is disingenuous on its face. According to Doyle's cult classic, the surrendered wife need not tell her husband that she has surrendered her will to his. Although Doyle offers many genuinely good ideas, this lack of openness allows the woman to retain power—power that she can withdraw at any time. Thus, Doyle's surrendered wife is free to manipulate him in a new dimension.

Even ignoring the above, an equally troublesome issue emerges. Central to Doyle's concept is the belief that if the woman surrenders, the man will as well. It is as if Doyle believes that the invisible hand of mutual surrender will always keep the marriage upright. Marriages are seldom as neat and clean as Doyle portrays them. Those that are, all too often degenerate into roommate relationships.

The difference between Doyle's surrendered wife and the Taken In Hand wife is that the latter accepts

her husband's natural inclination to take charge—even if it is over her objections. In this regard, she puts everything on the table—including the fact that she surrenders her will to his.

It follows then that her willingness to take a spanking is symbolic of the woman's new attitude. She realizes that spanking is as much about acceptance and security as it is about power.

When a woman is willing to truly surrender, a curious reversal occurs. What was once an inconvenient ritual to be endured as a child becomes a liberating experience. That which was once an article of faith in an angry politically correct diatribe is now little more than a stumbling block to intimacy.

Despite the objections above, Doyle's book is worth reading.¹⁵²

"THE COMING BATTLE" (11 FEBRUARY 2004)

I have come here secretly, seeking knowledge. It took me a long time to find Taken in Hand and I'm grateful for the information. I need some insight into my husband's rising dominant behaviors, and I need to know why it makes me want him so much. I need to know what he's going to do next, and after reading the articles posted here, it is becoming clear.

I have been unable to express or even acknowledge my spiritual and sexual needs; but my husband is discovering them, and he is going to give me what I been asking for all along. I must be prepared.

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Writing is my way of analyzing a situation. Elsewhere, I have written an erotic story, unbeknownst to my husband, and posted it anonymously out there on the net. It helped me to clarify my desires, but it also disturbed me—so much so, that I won't show him the story. He would have too much power knowing these secrets, some of which he has not yet discovered.

Regardless of my efforts to hide my desires, he is doggedly uncovering my secrets, on his own, and it worries me. Why should I want his dominance, his leadership, his firmness? Why is he taking on this battle, the one to take his dominance to the next level?

Why am I praying he does take it to the next level?

My husband doesn't know about Taken in Hand, but this site evidently knows him, and men like him, because it describes him intimately—a man who leads, and a woman who follows because he's worthy of her admiration. But men aren't supposed to lead anymore, and women aren't supposed to want that anymore. At least that's what the world tells me. But this site tells me there are other women like me. I thought there was something wrong with me—that I was the only woman left of a dying breed...

The only way to describe my heritage is Texan. The women of our family were—and still are—widely known as beautiful, intelligent, spirited, and unabashedly sexual. My mother and her sisters (seven in all) were likened to the "Seven Sisters Rose" of the Texas plains—a plant with seven roses blooming along its

stem. Each sister was exotically different from the others—our mixed-race ancestry birthed redheads, blondes, brunettes. All gorgeous, and all "wild-cats." My family tree openly bears the fruit—and the scars—of their relationships, for many men came to pluck the roses for their own garden. Our women surrender (submit is not a word we are allowed to use) to men they both respected and loved, strong men with strong hearts and strong spirits to match. But woe to the men who could not tame one of the "seven sisters" of Collin County! They would be broken, and left for men who could.

I am my mother's daughter, and I thank God that my father found her, for he was the only man to whom she would ever willingly surrender. Another man had tried to bend Mother to his will, but his heavy-handed beatings were a sign of weakness, not strength, so she left the brute. Not with his permission, of course. She escaped, and soon landed in the arms of my father, who made sure she never had to deal with such treatment ever again. Never did I hear my father raise my voice to my mother, and yet, she respected and loved him so that she would do anything he asked. Maybe with fussing, but it was always quiet fussing!

I was blessed to grow up in such a house, and foolishly, I wanted what they had. The strength, the commitment, and the understanding of a strong man for a strong woman's needs. But I could not find it.

I had mistaken coldness and arrogance for strength. My mistake cost

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me dearly, for instead of strength, my chosen husband's arrogance hid numerous affairs. I had been a virgin when we married, (so famously that at my high school they threatened to "sacrifice" me as the last one), so it was hard for me to imagine that a man who wanted such a "good girl" would give himself to other married women. I bore the emotional and spiritual abuse that such adultery generates, for our little daughter loved him so. But at last the abuse began to become physical, and one night I left with only my six-year-old daughter, and a brown paper bag of clothing. All the rest I left to my now ex-husband and his new soon-to-be wife...

I was free, and I had my daughter. That was all I needed to start my new life. I continued my teaching career, glad that it afforded me the ability to be with my child whenever she needed me, and I savored independence. But I was so lonely!

It wasn't that men were not interested. They were, and they approached me regularly, but I was afraid of failure. I simply refused to date. I asked God to lead me to a man who would meet my needs for a strong gentle man, and my daughter's needs for a daddy—and God answered by making me wait. I waited for three years...

When God's man finally found me, I was reading poetry for a wild crowd in a downtown coffee shop. My daughter was out of town with my ex-husband and his new family, and I was afraid that he would soon attempt to take her permanently. My ex-husband was always threatening to do that, and much worse if I did-

n't do exactly what he wanted. To ease the anxiety I went to my first big-city poetry reading, on a lark. "Paladin" (for that is what I shall call him here) still likes to tell how he first saw me—I looked hopelessly "small town", with my long red hair and flower-print dress. I was reading a poem I had written about love, abuse, and fear; at the end I threw down the book and stomped on it! This, he says, intrigued him. I, for my part, was also intrigued by the dangerous-looking tall Texan with wild black hair and piercing eyes, but I wasn't interested in going any further than intrigue. He was seven years younger than me, and I felt that was too young. I had grown used to young men approaching me, for even at thirty-one I was appeared much younger; and at less than five feet tall, I looked like I was still in high school. I knew how to end this, though.

I showed him my driver's license, and pointed out my age. It didn't work. I pulled out my daughter's picture, and waved it at him like an amulet to ward off demons. No luck. He escorted me home. I told him I didn't believe in premarital sex, and I asked him if he'd like to pray with me. He did, then he finally left. But he showed up the next morning with a frying pan and food. He had determined that I was starving to death and needed nourishment, because he had already seen my refrigerator and knew that teachers don't make much money. I relented, because I was hungry. He could cook—and I couldn't! By the end of the evening, he had me hopelessly in love. By the end of two weeks, he

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had introduced me to his parents. By the end of the month, he had faced down my ex-husband, and gotten my daughter back. On Valentine's Day, he proposed. I have been Paladin's woman ever since he first laid eyes on me. But that is only the beginning of my long seduction...

Perhaps he understood that in this politically correct world, men are not supposed to be dominant, and women are not supposed to want to them to be so. I myself was ashamed of my feelings, of my need for a dominating, confident lover. I had grown up loving my Father, loving John Wayne, and I wanted to be taken in hand, to be helped, to have the security of knowing that no one would hurt me or my child if only a strong man were there. I wanted a man I could depend upon. But while single, I had to take care of my little family in everything, and I was at least competent. I had accepted the fact that my needs were subverted, or perhaps even perverted; I thought I had suppressed all those longings. How odd, then that Paladin was able to see through it all.

I am in my heart an artist, a singer, a poet; but I had to care for my child. Artists, singers, and poets don't make much money, and I still feel a need to take on the responsibility of financing us. Paladin started down the path to gentle leadership by letting it be known that he could—and would—take care of us as we needed. If I wanted to work it should be to follow my heart's desire, not to fill our pockets. After I finally was able to accept that, he began to subtly introduce other elements, setting free the little things in myself that

overwhelming responsibilities had enslaved. Protective, nurturing, confident, he was eager to take on responsibilities I had come to dread. Fixing cars, building toys, making money, cooking dinner—he could literally do it all. He wanted these responsibilities, and he was taking them for his own. I also had responsibilities, but they now were of my own choosing—thanks to Paladin. I was now able to work metal, to sing, to write, to stay home with my daughter—and to finally have a son.

I myself have been blissfully in denial of Paladin's rising dominance in my life. It has occurred like a long, slow, deliberate seduction, one planned long in advance. He makes a living by observing others, and his ability to observe my strengths and weaknesses has given him an advantage in this seduction. Secrets I thought were only mine were readily apparent to him, and he's very good at tapping into my suppressed eroticism. What started out as tickling became wrestling, then gentle control, then much more...

He has such wonderful hands, and his presence is so overwhelming, that he is able to just do whatever he wants. He's a modern-day Marlboro man in suit, tie, and cowboy boots—and that masculine image is more than skin deep. It's a reality that makes what he does to me seem so natural, and yet so bad, and yet, it feels so good. There has to be something wrong with me...

This is my weakness, and I can't fight it. I love what he does. I love the feeling he gives me, and it makes me scared and sinfully delighted at the same time. Paladin knows this,

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and he knows I would never say anything about what I really, secretly want. So he found out about it, and made me want it. He made me say it. And it seems to be just a little part of the whole big picture that he has in mind.

Even now, I really can't say it—I'm still so embarrassed by it. I can't talk about what I really want. That's just me. I almost wish I could tell you, for surely you would be jealous to hear of it, how he does it, what he says to make me completely and totally his. It seems so strange, and it makes me feel wicked for wanting it. His enjoyment of it makes me nervous, but I love it so I can't hide it, and he is now in the process of making me ask for it. *He* knows what I want, and he is going to make sure *I* know what I want. But I'm afraid this is only the tip of the iceberg. What was once a forbidden treat has now become a staple of my erotic diet—and he is about to introduce an entire new way of feeding our relationship. It is necessary, but I'm not sure I'm ready for it.

I recognize his way now—he is introducing, step by slow step, the way he wants me to go. He is firmly and deliberately pushing in the direction he has determined will be best for us and for our family—and unfortunately for my ego, he is right. He may have moments of doubt, fear, and uncertainty, but he is still *right*—and he is still moving forward in the direction he has chosen for us to go. And therein lies the battle...

In the face of post-September 11 difficulties and uncertainties, I have become demanding and insecure. In

all marriages, there are missteps, but in response to Paladin's missteps, I panicked. I was so blinded by my own fears that I could not accept the path he had chosen. I did not trust him. I saw his dedication to his vision as a failure, a sign of weakness, and a case for me to take leadership of this family once and for all—with or without him. I would not accept “no”; he told me “no” anyway.

I rose up like a storm and threatened to take the whole house down with me—but patiently, and admitting his own missteps, Paladin has weathered the storm. And the end result? His path led to an opportunity I would have thrown away: more money than we've ever made before, and a chance for him to be what he is called to be. But Paladin has evidently come to the conclusion that I need help in managing this need for leadership. His assessment may be right—but I'm still not quite able to admit it myself. I'm still not ready to claim my heritage.

That heritage? On the plains of Texas, a woman had to be strong so she could *livelong* enough to find a man—someone strong enough to raise a family, make a home, make love grow. This was necessary for survival in a hard world. This world always has been hard, and we've just been reminded of how hard it is, yet again. A man *must* be stronger than even a strong woman might be, because according to my husband, “a man's got to do what a man's got to do”. I have a job to do, but so does Paladin. A man who's not stronger than me isn't going to make it in this world, because it's taken every bit of strength for me to get this far—but I

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have proven how strong I am. Now I want to prove how strong Paladin is. It's a high standard, but one I need to embrace, if I am to be true to myself.

Worried, I myself have told Paladin that he should think of my family's "feminine warrior" culture as a game—one where he just has to stay on top of the mountain lest I push him off. He looked at me with all seriousness and told me "I don't play games". No, this isn't a game—and I'm a little scared. But wickedly, he's tied his dominance to my secret erotic and heretofore "forbidden" desires; I don't want to want it, but I can't help it. He wants it, but for a different reason. He plans on being the man in this family...

We're going to see if he's man enough to take me.

What was once just for play is now for real. I have been desperately searching for something to tell me what is going on in his mind, and I believe this web site is closer to his mind-set than anything else out there. There is no strange acronym for a man taking the helm of in his own family. There is no shame for a woman realizing that she was never sentenced to do it all on her own. There is no name for this desire we share—he knows what he wants, he has found out what I want, and he is bringing those desires together.

I'm not sure what my surrender is going to bring, but it's not quite here yet—but it's coming, and the battle could be epic. This is a battle between what the world has told me I want, and what my heart has told me I want. If Paladin wins, I win. And he's the man I think he is, I

have no doubt that Paladin will win...¹⁵³

"DOES IT HAVE TO HURT TO BE TAKEN IN HAND?" (12 FEBRUARY 2004)

Since discovering Taken In Hand a few months ago, I've been trying to get a handle on what it means to me. I can relate to many of the articles. However, those articles don't hit dead center for me. The one that comes closest is the boss's "I don't want to be a servant or slave." In my view, Taken In Hand is not about servitude, or enslavement, or a martinet's discipline. Taken In Hand to me is more like a dance. The man leads, guiding both across the floor, but with each step she chooses to follow or not. She follows because she trusts him to guide them both through the swirling, ever-changing crowd of dancers.

Is this taking a lover in hand? I believe it is. Fundamentally, Taken In Hand is the consensual surrendering of some personal sovereignty to another. Sovereignty is the quality or authority of being independent and in charge of the conditions you live under. When you surrender sovereignty, you give another person the power to control some, if not all, of the conditions you live under. Realistically, we negotiate our level of personal sovereignty in every interaction with another person and that level is in constant flux. To be taken in hand is to allow some of your most intimate conditions to be influenced. Influenced rather than controlled, as you can always refuse to follow. This influence requires the

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most intimate connection between the individuals. Deep trust is required and that can only come in response to absolute and unassailable concern for you. It is this connection that is the fundamental element of Taken In Hand.

The different views of Taken In Hand are simply manifestations of this connection. Service, slavery, control, or discipline are all ways to maintain the connection between the two individuals. Each creates a sense of intimate sovereignty being surrendered. With each service performed, each command obeyed, each spank received, the sensation that you no longer control all the conditions you live under is enlivened. My feeling is that the connection can also be asserted through "care". Can the sensation of surrender not be sparked by being bathed, being held, being massaged, being caressed, or having your coat buttoned? True, these are all things that might be desired or even demanded, but then so are spankings or serving another. The difference is attitude and timing. The difference is submitting to being bathed, or being held, or being spanked, etc., even when you'd rather not. Submitting by choice because you don't want to break the connection by refusing. Choice of submission is also key: you must choose to submit; force or coercion destroys the connection, breaking the trust.

So what does being taken in hand look like? Is it being tossed over a knee for sound spanking? Is it being commanded to do something? The recent discussion about the film *Secretary* caused me to consider

when and even if, Mr Grey took Lee in hand.

It seems to me that when he tells her to stop the cutting, that is when he takes her in hand. When he brings up the cutting, she stiffens, preparing to be judged, to be questioned about what she is thinking, to resist. But he doesn't order her to stop, he doesn't tell her that she should stop, he simply tells her, quietly, that she's done with that.

I believe this is why she complies. An order would imply she should do it for him, telling her she should get a hold of herself would imply she should take control of her actions when in reality the cutting is how she feels control, but the way he just looks at her and says to stop, screams "I'm here to help you put that behind you."

We see Lee hesitate, almost panic at the thought of losing her crutch, to her surprise she agrees. The voiceover after also implies that she isn't sure why or how she stopped. She simply states that she stopped bringing her kit to work, eventually tossing it away.

To me this is Taken In Hand. Being Taken In Hand is having someone you allow to tell you to stop. To stop doing something that isn't in your best interest. Something that interferes with your happiness, but more importantly your contentment. They don't order you to stop. They don't tell you that you have to stop yourself. They simply acknowledge what you are doing and tell you not to do it. They see you. They see the real you and care enough infringe your personal sovereignty, to cross the invisible borders we all have, to dare

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to attempt to influence the most intimate conditions you live under. They cannot use force but rather can only create opportunity and offer assistance that you are free to take advantage of or not.

Sounds simple? It's not! From the day we are born, we start fighting to become independent beings. A two year old ventures further and further from their mother. A teenager works hard to have a life separate from their parents. Giving up even some of this independence can be almost impossible. But while we strive to be independent, we also long for someone we have a deep connection with, for that one person whom we allow to influence the conditions we live under, for that one person who knows and accepts our true self. For someone who "gets" us.

Interestingly, you cannot influence someone's personal sovereignty without surrendering some of your own sovereignty. You cannot maintain influence over the most intimate conditions of another without fully accepting the enormity of the responsibility. That responsibility changes the conditions that you live under. Taken In Hand simply acknowledges that there is a natural tendency for men and women to be toward a particular side of this equation.

Taken In Hand need not involve domination and submission or even corporal discipline. It can be realized in small innocuous acts. A glance to confirm assent, being bathed, being massaged, deferring the final decision, are all small acts that affect our independence. Being taken in hand

is not the act, it's the reason. It's not being bathed, it's allowing yourself to be put in the tub to be washed or to relax. It's not the act of deferring to a decision, it's trusting someone to decide because you trust that the decision will be in your interest. Taken In Hand is not glancing at someone for permission, it is being concerned how a choice affects that person. It is the connection the acts build and support.

This is my view of Taken In Hand. Submission, not by obedience, discipline, or control, but by the surrendering of small parts of your independence to the care of another. Taken In Hand is a way to keep this surrender fresh and alive. Taken In Hand is a multitude of small acts that daily confirm the surrender of sovereignty. Taken In Hand is dropping all your walls to allow the most intimate conditions you live under to be influenced by another. It is trusting another to care for you most intimately, it's caring enough for another that they trust you with their most intimate self.¹⁵⁴

"EACH RELATIONSHIP IS A UNIQUE WORK IN PROGRESS" (13 FEBRUARY 2004)

My Missy and I have learned so much from reading Taken In Hand. We use it as a reference in exploring ideas and concepts that others have experienced and commented on. We marvel at the variety of individuals and couples who participate here, and we enjoy hearing about what other folks are doing to improve the depth of their love for each other.

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The relationships are described on Taken In Hand remind me of one of my favorite foods. If you've ever visited New Orleans, you may have had the opportunity to try a bowl of *Gumbo*. This delicious meal is a bit like a soup, but also a bit like a stew. But what's interesting about Gumbo is that it is a concoction of so many ingredients: a little shrimp, a crab claw, maybe a piece of chicken, perhaps some sausage, possibly some okra, and maybe some other components known only to the cook.

One thing's for sure, when you walk into the kitchen and get a whiff of the aroma, you know that something good is on the stove. No two Gumbos are the same, but each tastes good to those who eat it, having been made to suit that family or restaurant. Even when a recipe is passed down from generation to generation, the recipe isn't cloned, but seems to be modified, if ever so slightly, to have its own flavor, to become its own work of art.

What we have learned from reading Taken In Hand is that the relationships that we have observed have a common thread, a similar base, and most have many of the same ingredients. However, we have also noticed that each relationship is a work in progress with similar but not identical ingredients. We have seen couples taking the risk of possible rejection, cultivating a desire for deeper levels of intimacy, introducing various levels and types of discipline, one partner lovingly submitting to her loving, dominant man. We have seen the search for new, or more intense, communication, dealing with the fear that ac-

companies the first steps in trust, and other components necessary to create the relationship that the couple seeks.

Each relationship is quite different. But who is to say that the warm aroma of one relationship is better than that of another, or that the recipe for happiness in one couple is exactly what is needed for all? While we are grateful for the concepts that we have learned from reading Taken In Hand, one of the most important things we have learned is *not* to copy someone else's recipe. We have learned that the relationships described in the articles are *dynamic* and that they are ever moving. We all build our own system, reach for our own needs, and blaze our own trails—because the journey is as important as the destination.¹⁵⁵

"WHAT I GET OUT OF IT" (15 FEBRUARY 2004)

In the past, I always felt I had to suppress my natural tendency to control. Where then, I would keep things to myself so as not to rock the boat (at great cost to myself, it has to be said), now that I'm with my Lady Love, there's a huge sense of freedom and power. Where before, I was half a man, if that, now I am free to be the man I have always dreamed of being. It's an intense feeling of freedom, love, gratitude, and yes, power.

When we're walking down the street holding hands like young lovers, I know she's mine, she belongs to me, and it's a great feeling.

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When she gets out of hand and I take her in hand, and she cries and screams but still presents her butt to me, never once getting up and leaving the room, always submitting, consenting, the connection I feel to her is intense, both emotional and sexual.

Best of all, I get to be the head of the household and have things how I want them in my own home, and my Lady Love **LIKES** it that way. I have it all: peace, order and harmony, and great sex and a loving bond. What man could ask for more?¹⁵⁶

"CHANGE OF HEART" (17 FEBRUARY 2004)

You might want to read "First year trials"* before reading this article.

[The] boss, you ask[†] about the process of letting go of the testing and settling down, and I've had to think about it in order to answer.

What would happen was this: Robert would exercise his authority in some way and I would hit the roof! It would go something like this:

R: "Susiejoy, it's time to go to bed. Shut off the computer and go upstairs now, and I'll come and tuck you in."

S: "NO! I'm not READY to go to bed! I'll go to bed in a while!"

R: "NOW, Susie."

S: "I hate this! You just want me out of your hair! This has NOTHING to

do with my wellbeing, you're just being mean!"

R: (grabs me by arm and marches me upstairs all the while I'm wailing and yelling)

S: "I'm sorry Robert, I'm sorry....please don't leave me, I'm sorry I can't help myself, I'm so afraid you're going to leave me because I'm so awful."

R: (pushes me down on the bed and begins spanking me): "I will NEVER (SPANK!) EVER (SPANK!) leave you, but I can't wait for the day (SPANK!) when you stop testing me in this way." (SPANK!)

Finally, one day, I got outside myself enough to see Robert's face during one of these spankings. It was determined, and tired and a little sad. And finally something like a shell around me shattered and my heart swelled with peace: I finally realized that 1. Robert meant that he would never, ever leave me and 2. I was exhausting him and 3. I wanted to be a better submissive to him.

It really did stop pretty suddenly, I think. I think in that moment of epiphany during that particular spanking I saw a real man who really loved me and that I was hurting him. And when I would get triggered after that, I would remember that moment, and it would sober me and stop me from letting go into rage. Perhaps it was allowing the reality of Robert's steadfast love (and good right arm!) to temper my fears and resentments. Perhaps it was realizing that Robert was *really* going to be in charge, and that my tantrums wouldn't stop him from exercising his authority. Perhaps it was letting go of the internal

* "First year trials," 10 November 2003.

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See:

<<https://web.archive.org/web/20130128061225/http://www.takeninhand.com/first.year.trials#comment-152>>

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Fantasy Dominant and embracing the real one beside me. In any case, obedience is a *hello* of a lot easier now, almost second nature. And I've grown to adore and trust my husband so much my desire to have him proud of me outweighs any frustrations that obedience brings.¹⁵⁷

"IT'S NOT ABOUT BLAME, SO FORGET FAIRNESS!" (18 FEBRUARY 2004)

The King wrote:*

I'll add my thanks to Blush for this stimulating post.[†] I too find it a good way to unwind after a stressful day, and my wife loves it. We also find it a good way for me to get out my irritation or anger when there's a problem. It was my wife that persuaded me this is OK. I was worried by it but she was adamant this is one of the main benefits of a relationship in which discipline is sanctioned. What do others think?

I think this is right. One of the main things I read from women and men alike, and a recurring problem for many beginning in Intimate Discipline, is the concept that spanking for discipline must be "fair." We're not supposed to spank her unless she "deserves" it. Well, that is one approach, but I have seen so many times when this fundamental tenet of "fairness" is more of a problem than an enhancement.

Many of us learn over time that it really does not matter if the woman needs to be spanked or the husband needs to spank her, such as Blush and King describe. Another thing that happens, and I personally believe it must happen more often than it is reported, is that an original disruption in a relationship starts with the husband, not the wife. Yet it is "fair" to spank the wife only when the disruption shows up in her behavior which eventually it surely will. Why would we want to wait that long? Why should the husband not act first to spank her when he already knows taking this control will enrich them both?

If we believe the ultimate intent of discipline is to enrich intimacy, not to blame our wife for the problem, then it only makes sense that the need for discipline can originate from either partner. I think this is recognized by both Blush and King and I believe by many others who share the head of the household/HORDynamic.¹⁵⁸

"OFFERING AN OLIVE BRANCH" (18 FEBRUARY 2004)

Last night my husband and I went out for a meal and ended up missing our last train home so decided to treat ourselves to a night at the Ritz! It was great until we decided to couple that with another bottle of wine and got into an argument. I know that after a certain amount to drink I get stropy and say things to be provocative in a very negative way. I'm not even sure what it was that I said last night. My husband

* See:

<<https://web.archive.org/web/20130128065117/http://www.takeninhand.com/to.let.go#comment-18>>

† 'To let go,' 28 September 2003.

was obviously furious and also upset by whatever it was I'd said but I didn't back down and stormed off to bed. He was so angry that he decided to go find another room and it took me about seven calls to his mobile to get him to come back and listen to my apology. He listened but was clearly very angry and I could feel him withdrawing from me, I was stuck because I had completely lost any memory of whatever it was I had been going on about.

So, I laid myself across his knee and said I knew that I deserved it. He gave me the hardest spanking of my life—he had to stop because his hand was so sore. When he stopped, I again said I was sorry, he accepted my apology and said that was an end to it.

This morning at breakfast I asked him if I had done the right thing or whether he felt I should have waited for him to tell me I was going to be punished. He felt very clearly that it was the right thing for me to do, he was even perceptive enough to recognise the extreme mental blocks I had to overcome to get to the point of laying myself over his knee and accepting a spanking voluntarily, he spanked me very, very hard and although he would normally restrain me because I always struggle and want to pull away, last night he didn't and I had to overcome a huge internal struggle in order to continue with my "offering."

It worked though. But then again I think an olive branch is always one of the most successful healers.¹⁵⁹

"IS HE ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS... OR NOT?" (20 FEBRUARY 2004)

A good guy...

- listens to dissent
- negotiates—tries to reach agreement
- can take a little criticism
- won't call you controlling to shut you up and stop you expressing your criticism/dissatisfaction, etc.
- is not hypersensitive
- doesn't get angry too much
- is reliable
- doesn't jerk you around
- doesn't yank your chain
- doesn't needle you
- doesn't treat you disrespectfully and then complain that you are not showing HIM the proper respect
- doesn't put you down
- tries to build you up, not introduce self-doubt in you
- doesn't lay down conditions on being in the relationship with you
- respects things in your life that are important to you
- adds to your life and happiness
- admits and apologizes when he has made a mistake.

Jerk clues to watch out for (Walk away even if only a couple of these apply!):

- can't take criticism
- He calls YOU controlling. (SOUND THE ALARM!)
- He has a bad temper/he's volatile/gets angry about things.
- He can't tolerate dissent.
- If only you would just do as he says, everything would be fine and you'd be happy.

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- It's all your fault whenever anything goes wrong, as anyone can see. (NOT)

- You're always the one being "unreasonable", never him.

- He either never admits that he's wrong, or offers profuse apologies for his mistake... only to do something even worse next time.

- He isolates you from your friends and family. Everyone is out to get him, or crazy, or an unsuitable friend for you to have. He makes it a loyalty thing. Him or them. Pick them.

- Your self esteem has suffered. You used to be confident and happy; now you're not.

- When he's loving, he's exceptionally loving. The good times stand out in your mind as being a slice of heaven.

- If a friend or family member you're close to has expressed concerns that you don't seem happy, and is worried that your relationship is not good for you, don't ignore their concerns. Try to be honest with yourself. Could they be right? Family and close friends can often see that all is not well long before we can. Even if your guy is not a jerk, he might nevertheless be bad for you. That matters too. A relationship should make you happier, not less happy.¹⁶⁰

"DON'T TELL ME TO LEAVE MY BAGGAGE AT THE DOOR" (21 FEBRUARY 2004)

For many years I have struggled with my "baggage". Lugging it around with me everywhere, I certainly didn't want to meet anyone

with their own trailer load in tow. A man with baggage was definitely off limits. I wanted a man with no kids, no previous marriages, no bad relationships, no hang-ups, no issues, heck, no personality. I had pretty much excluded about 100% of the population.

So what exactly is baggage and why are we so dead set against it? What is this obsession we have for it, or lack thereof? Perhaps it's selfishness or laziness in dealing with extra problems. Maybe it's a fear of seeing ourselves in someone else; maybe it's just a whole new can of worms we aren't capable of dealing with. We all have our own protective mechanisms, and our means of coping with various circumstances are very diverse. But we've all had issues, and everyone has so-called baggage.

As I've grown and matured, my opinions on certain things have changed dramatically. I'm now in my early 30s and my outlook on life is that of someone who's been around the block a couple of times. I am an ever-evolving individual and I am more assertive about expressing myself than ever before. There are certain things that get my goat, and frankly this "baggage" thing is one of them. So let me vent.

Baggage is another label which immediately devalues a person's life experiences; it belittles their challenges and hardships. Experiences we collect on our journey through life add to our personalities and give us character. They bestow us with strength. The adage "that which doesn't kill us only makes us stronger" springs to mind. Challenges

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push us to our limits; they stretch our boundaries and encourage our tenacity. Hardships we all endure at some time or other facilitate adeptness and adaptability; they instill in us survival. They have the ability to change the face of innocence; they form the mortar of the walls we build to protect our vulnerable hearts; and they precipitate the infinite loss of trust.

So don't tell me to leave my baggage at the door. It is my rucksack full of the very essence of me. My entire substance lives within—my love, anger, fear, vulnerability, elation, innocence, regret. It holds memories of past woes and dreams of future exuberances. It is everything I've learned, everything that I've lost and also gained. It is all of who I am and I cannot, will not leave it behind. So don't ask me. Instead invite me inside with my baggage and we'll unpack it together. I'll place my experiences and struggles right there beside yours. I may be timid at first, I may not trust you enough to share, but with time and understanding our love will be strength enough to carry the load. The burden of both yours and mine will be ours to share. Together.¹⁶¹

"WHY IS REAL PUNISHMENT SPANKING EROTIC?" (22 FEBRUARY 2004)

Why is real punishment spanking erotic?

Many Taken In Hand folk do not use physical discipline or punishment in their relationship. But for those who do, this series of articles

explains some otherwise puzzling facts and paradoxes.

Why, people often ask, is real punishment or discipline (spanking, caning, cropping, paddling, switching, whipping, etc.) erotic even though it can be extremely painful and anything but erotic while it is happening? And why do Taken In Hand folk often (though not in all cases) find so-called erotic spanking decidedly unerotic? Why do some (but not all) Taken In Hand folk find maintenance spanking lacking, somehow? Is punishment spanking a Taken In Hand woman like spanking a child? If being punished is erotic, surely that means it is just a game?! If being physically taken in hand is erotic, how can it possibly effect changes in behaviour? If the woman loves being punished, surely she will act up to get more punishment? So wouldn't it be better to find some other means of punishment that she would genuinely hate? How can giving her something she craves help?! How can spanking possibly help couples solve problems?!¹⁶²

"A BREAKDOWN ON THE ROAD TO INTIMACY" (22 FEBRUARY 2004)

The path to intimacy isn't always smooth. There are bumps, obstacles, stop signs and potholes. In our twenty years of marriage, Missy and I have navigated our share of these obstacles, but recently, using Taken In Hand articles to guide us, we have been working to smooth out the road ahead by increasing the

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intimacy between us and making what was very good even better.

We started off like a world-class sprinter out of the starting blocks, went a ways, got a cramp here and there that slowed us down, but kept going, then settled into a pretty good pace for a long distance race.

Then we hit a snag. It was a conflict. Missy was upset. She had made a commitment for us as a couple without first checking with me, and she was upset because she thought that I would be angry with her. She had indeed made a mistake. Don't get me wrong. Missy is a free thinker, an intelligent woman, and these are qualities that I cherish in her. But my time and role in the commitment was substantial so I should indeed have been involved in making this decision.

We were driving home and we were both hungry and tired, which sometimes doesn't make for the most constructive conversation. Then Missy told me about this commitment she had made for us. It really was a mistake, and Missy kind of knew it was too, because she seemed to feel the need to justify her action. Knowing that we were both tired and a bit out of sorts, I wanted to avoid having a big discussion about it that might turn ugly. Later, I called the people involved and backed out of the commitment—in a gracious, face-saving way (I think) that made it appear that I didn't properly communicate my desires to Missy. That solved the problem regarding the commitment.

But in the car, Missy became upset because she did not like being told that the decision was not a good one.

She is sometimes very prideful (as I am), and doesn't like being told that she is not perfect, and that I wasn't very happy (remember, we were probably both a bit grumpy, tired, etc.) about the decision. Unfortunately, although I was trying to do the best thing I could at the time, in trying to avoid getting into a big discussion about it, I probably inadvertently exacerbated Missy's distress, and her refusal to drop the matter in turn made me feel harangued and annoyed. This then made her fear a disciplinary session over my knee.

This fear of discipline threw her into a tizzy. I was shocked and gravely alarmed. This did not reflect well on how she was viewing being taken in hand physically. Her fear made me put on the brakes to stop any further action regarding this particular issue, and discipline in general.

It wasn't easy to do this. I had embraced our Taken In Hand relationship from the first day. It was the beginning of a feeling of fulfillment that I had never known before. Just as importantly, our relationship was like new, on fire, and hitting on all cylinders. We were suddenly a couple in the purest sense of the word, in a way that we had never been before. While our marriage had always been very good, it was now the stuff that others only dream of.

But I am no abuser, and I could not in good conscience continue to discipline Missy given its apparent effect on her. We had to stop. We had to identify what was wrong, evaluate it, and correct it, or a crash was sure to come. So, we talked, and talked, and talked. Finally, it came

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out: Missy relished the playful spankings, but the disciplinary ones totally destroyed her emotionally. The basis for her reaction was, she discovered and then confided in me, that she saw a discipline spanking as a form of rejection. Of course, I did my best to assure her that I love her unconditionally, and that, while I may be upset over something said or done occasionally, I would never reject her.

In talking more about this, we discovered that Missy's anguish had nothing to do with the physical aspect of the spanking. She realized that she was feeling this anguish whenever I would become upset—whether discipline was involved or not. Her anguish was not about the spanking, it was about wanting me never ever to be upset, even when I am so tired and out of sorts that it would take a saint not to be a bit grumpy.

This revelation made me re-examine how our relationship had been before we had introduced Taken In Hand ideas into our marriage. In his article, "What I get out of it," Todd Evans said, "In the past, I always felt I had to suppress my natural tendency to control. Where then, I would keep things to myself so as not to rock the boat (at great cost to myself, it has to be said), ..."? This is what I had been doing myself, before we introduced these ideas. In an effort not to upset Missy or rock the marriage boat, I had tended to avoid addressing problems. With the introduction of Taken In Hand ideas, this changed, and I had started addressing problems. While that was a good thing, as it solved what had

been a problem in our marriage, it highlighted the existing but hitherto unrecognized problem of Missy tending to feel rejected and wounded whenever I mentioned any problem or mistake on her part.

With all of this in our heads, I had Missy read some of the articles dealing with being taken in hand. She started with Frank Nelson's article, "It's not about blame, so forget 'fairness'!," then read the articles by Blush* and The King† and all of the comments associated with those articles. The focus of all the articles she read was on intimacy: rejection wasn't even considered as they described discipline. As she read, it hit her that discipline doesn't have to mean rejection, and that for Taken In Hand couples, it is the opposite of rejection. As the boss has written in her article, "Why you should *not* withhold spanking!," it is actually a reaffirmation of the relationship. Missy realized that the problem was that she had an unrealistic expectation that I would never ever be a bit grumpy or think that some action she had taken was a mistake.

Missy also noticed that not only did the women writing on Taken In Hand not experience rejection, but these ladies used the spankings to further the intimacy within their relationships. This was an eye-opener for Missy. After her research, she sent me a message while I was at work and stated, "It seems that I'm the only one who is experiencing feelings of rejection. I think I've been

* "To let go," 28 September 2003.

† "What I get out of it," 15 February 2004.

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seeing things incorrectly and that it's time to focus on intimacy—even in our disagreements and upsets."

That was music to my ears, since intimacy has been the goal that I have been pursuing all along.

Missy now views my firm hand with loving acceptance, and has even encouraged me to deal with any little problems or upsets we have, with discipline as the motivator. After a recent encounter over my knee, she snuggled next to me to thank me, then declared, "Well, we're back on track and it feels wonderful."?

With this roadblock behind us, we have resumed the journey. Drive on.¹⁶³

"MY DEEP DARK SECRET" (27 FEBRUARY 2004)

I have always felt very different from everyone else, and as though I had a dark, dirty secret I was nervous someone would discover, because I felt ashamed. That is, I had always felt like this until told my husband about wanting him to take me in hand. I always felt that maybe I was a freak, and read too many books.

My father is a very weak male and it always disgusted me that he had such little pride that he would never defend himself. My mother was and still is horrible to him. Growing up, I never saw a marriage that I would base mine on. I would prefer to be single my whole life than to have a marriage like my parents'.

I always wanted and dreamed of the strong, sexy but gentle, loving

and kind, no b.s type man. When I was younger I dreamed of running off to Texas and finding me a tough, rugged cowboy. The type of a man who has balls and uses them. When I started dating I usually thought most guys just have them there as an ornament because there was no way they were housing any testosterone. I was married once before very briefly to a male (not a man). I definitely never shared my secret with him for he was already abusive enough.

Since sharing my secret with my husband, for the first time I feel normal. I have such a peace inside me, a total and complete freeness—something I never thought I would ever feel. Couldn't have even imagined what it would feel like. When I shared with my husband my need to be taken in hand, instead of rejecting me, he loved me even more. It was the first time anyone had ever truly seen all of me and still thought I was his queen...lol..(his words, not mine).

I have so much more self esteem just having been able to finally tell the secret I kept for 30 years. I married this most wonderful man seven years ago, but it wasn't until four months ago when we switched to domestic discipline that I got my cowboy from Texas. Okay, fine, he's more like a farm boy from Saskatchewan... but he has promised to take me to Texas.¹⁶⁴

"THE PARADOX OF THE MASTER AND THE QUEEN" (28 FEBRUARY 2004)

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This article* reminded me of an apparent paradox I've been wanting to analyze. In my own experience and on this site, it seems that our men, when we ask them to take us in hand—to be our masters, you might say—they become ardent slaves to our happiness. Not *instead*, but at the same time. Their mastery enslaves them, you might say. The expressions of love for the women on Taken In Hand, the devotion to them and their happiness that is expressed here, is breathtaking.

I think part of the secret to this is in an earlier piece† I wrote describing my husband's aversion to responsibility and obligation. He hates to be reminded of what he SHOULD or OUGHT to be doing. Motivation, for him, springs from self-determination, from his wants and desires. When I became submissive to him, I ceased to represent a lot of SHOULDs and OUGHTs. With those out of the way, the fact that he WANTS to make me happy is more present in his mind.

So, we bow down to offer ourselves to our masters, and find that they have crowned us queens.¹⁶⁵

"NEVER DO WITHOUT SEX AGAIN" (28 FEBRUARY 2004)

A question has been asked on this site: What do men get out of taking their woman in hand and why might other men want to do the same?

* "My deep dark secret," 27 February 2003.

† "How can you submit when you feel <i>frustrated</i>?" 14 December 2003.

Others have answered but no man so far has had the balls to state directly the #1 reason why a man will want to take his woman in hand.

It's like this, guys: take your woman in hand and you'll never have to do without sex again. Headaches and "not tonight, I'm too tired" indifference will give way to the ache of desire—hers, for you. Women love it. You think your woman would never want to be taken in hand? You think she's too dominant, too feminist, too bossy, too uninterested in you? You think your wife's just not the type? She's not a sexual animal? You think she probably forgot there's such a thing as sex round about the time of her first pregnancy? You think it would take a miracle to get her fired up again?

Wrong.

Take her in hand and see what happens.

I don't know why it works but trust me guys, it works.

UPDATE: One thing I've not made clear: taking her in hand is not necessarily taking her OTK. I take my wife in hand when I tell her to take a cab or bus home instead of walking if it's after dark. I take my wife in hand when I ask her if she took a cab; and when she admits she walked, I take her in hand when I show my concern and tell her she shouldn't have walked and it's for her safety. I take my wife in hand when I tell her to make an appointment to see her doctor, and when I check she's done that. I take her in hand when I give her a short lecture out of concern for her welfare/safety. I take her in hand in a

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thousand small ways that don't involve any spanking. When I take her in hand, she often tells me later it made her feel loved and protected — and excited.¹⁶⁶

"LOOKING INTO THE MIRROR OF LIFE" (28 FEBRUARY 2004)

Here is a slightly different twist on emotional baggage.

People disdain baggage for the same reasons that they praise virginity (both in females and fabric content), fall in love with new houses, or buy new cars. There is a rather naïve belief that if something is fresh and new, it is perfect.

Yet, as many people know, a new automobile can be a lemon. Even a brand spanking new house can hide a mountain of flaws under its smooth paint. And, even virgins at the altar can bring quirks into the marriage.

In the end, we hate the emotional baggage in others for that which we carry within ourselves. We are quick to find problems with others because they are precisely what we find in our own lives.

All too often an attitude about the emotional baggage of others says far more about narcissism than it does about love. Of course, this is not to say that there are not people who come with more baggage than we are emotionally, spiritually, or physically equipped to handle!

In short, although some are smug and self-righteous, none of us are perfected specimens of humanity. We simply seek to elevate our own status through our identity with

new cars, just completed buildings, and superficially flawless people.¹⁶⁷

"SHARING THE SECRET OF OUR SUCCESS" (1 MARCH 2004)

When you receive comments like: "What happened? You two look so much in love now!" you may feel like sharing the secret of your success. This is a common feeling. We can sense some of our friends are not really happy in their own marriages. Some are still struggling to find some way to gain the intimacy and connection they see us model, while others of course are already on the verge of divorce. We want to tell them because what we do is so delightful and powerful, but experience has taught me that if you try to explain the inner workings of your relationship dynamics, you are likely to be met with confusion, at best, and most likely condemnation. So how can we help our friends while still being true to ourselves and still answering their questions honestly?

Let's look at where criticism might first come from. Forget, for the moment at least, the glaring illogic of being asked, by those in unhappy marriages, to explain our measured success, and then being told that we are "doing our marriage wrong."

Most condemnation will come, we have found, when we talk about the husband "having the final say" or being the head of the household. If we happen to mention using spanking as discipline, we hear shouts of "Abuse!" and perhaps comments to the effect that we really need to seek professional help.

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We have accomplished nothing except estranging our friends. We each go our ways. We live our way in an enriched marriage; our friends are left confused and possibly even very concerned over the wife's emotional and physical health. It is not exactly the result we want. We have to find a different way to talk about this.

One thing I try to do when explaining the nature of my relationship to conventional friends is to change the language I use. I don't use language such as "final say" or even "head of the household" because those phrases tend to give the misleading and alarming impression that we are talking about a domineering man bullying a miserable down-trodden woman. What language would I use instead?

Instead of using the expression "final say", which has the effect of diminishing in the minds of some the active participation of the wife in what is in reality a mutually enhancing relationship design, I would simply explain that the husband has agreed to remain emotionally involved instead of withdrawing and will do his part to stay solidly present to resolve contention into resolution.

I have explained, with some success, that I would describe our relationship as a self-designed structure called "intimate discipline." Many are taken aback at first, but I then explain some of the intricacies that appear more conventional than not. I explain that we have agreed upon expectations for each other, agreed upon "rituals" in some cases, agreed upon methods of dealing with inevi-

table contention. This, I explain, is "discipline" because it is powerful language and it keeps us in check.

I give some examples. For me, in my first marriage, I had a tendency to withdraw or retreat in the face of contention or an argument. Most men and women can relate to this behavior response of the husband in a marriage contention. The trouble, I explain, is that this response leaves the wife feeling frustrated and unheard, and the husband feeling powerless, angry and hurt. Nothing is accomplished, there is no resolution, and over time the marriage intimacy diminishes.

I explain that we have agreed that it is my direct responsibility to exercise control over the direction of these various contentions. She has agreed to accept my control over directing the course of discussion.

My taking this control works, I explain, because of my more generally reserved nature and because this style connects very well with minimizing the effects of her sometimes more volatile nature. This discipline keeps us both on track to actually solve problems, allowing us both to be actually "heard" in a real sense and my responsibility (and her acceptance of it) prohibits me from falling into the old pattern of sullen withdrawal.

I sometimes call my consent to control these interactions "Head of the Relationship" to give it a label and to mark a distinction between this and the negative connotations often assigned to "head of the household". I want to measure what I say and how I say it against the old stereotype of "father knows best"

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which is simply unacceptable to most and, in fact, is not what we do or how we live. By saying "Head of Relationship" I am simply saying I am "head" of our relationship interactions through our agreement because that is what works best.

But, I explain, it is also much more than a technique for solving problems. Intimate Discipline is a way of living that enriches us as a couple. We have different "constructs" which have the effect of connecting us and which in the end will enhance our intimacy and make everything else we do more meaningful and, to be sure, easier in moments of crisis.

We pay attention to each other. We eat dinner together and use this time to talk and spend time together. We acknowledge each other when the other enters a room, even if we are busy with something. For instance, if I am on the phone, even a business call, I will stop for a moment and acknowledge her if she comes in the room. We do things for each other, just little things, but we want each other to know our relationship is the most important thing we both own. We intentionally demonstrate this in both our words and our actions. This is "discipline" because it would be so easy over time for us to take both each other and our relationship for granted.

But what about taking her in hand physically? Since this is likely one of the most important parts of our relationship and what distinguishes some of us from regular folk it seems this part really needs to be explained in some way. Sometimes things do get out of hand and the

relationship really does need to be brought back on track. This very rightly may be asked of us. I personally like "taking her in hand" as a general description for even a conventional population. I like this because "taking her in hand" can mean many different things depending on a couple's perception. In Intimate Discipline, our tactic is for me as the man to be responsible for our interactions, to direct contention to resolution and to generally keep a discipline of connection alive and healthy. How would I explain how I do this?

I don't have to explain this at all. Even among us, we do these things differently though, agreeably, we have some things in common. Intimate Discipline requires only that a couple agrees on relationship management and following this a couple must also agree on some way the Head of Relationship or the head of this process may intervene to get interactions back on track when it goes awry.

Spanking works for us because we have taken what is otherwise erotic, given it a twist and allowed spanking to become an intervention tactic. What is erotic for your friend? Does she find it sexual or erotic for her husband to sit her down and be vocally firm? This is "taking her in hand" if she has a generally positive response to this. Does she find it sufficient for him to simply say "Enough!" and would this set the discussion back on track?

The important thing is for each couple to find their own way through their own sexual expressions and sexual behaviors to gain or

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regain their stable interactions. This will normally require the development of some way they can agree for one of them to accept control and responsibility for turning contention into resolution. The easiest and best way is to use some tactic that has a sexually connective quality such as we do with discipline spanking.

If spanking is not erotic for the couple you are talking to, there is no need to go into this aspect of what we do. In fact, discussing our technique of spanking is useless and indeed harmful. I think the important thing to say is that we have together designed a relationship structure which suits us both, that we both have full input, and that we are in full agreement both on the inner workings and the tactics for recovery during the inevitable times when it goes awry.

It is important to stress the fact of mutual agreement, and any agreement is okay as long as there is follow-through and as long as it works to enrich the marriage. What we do can be used (with appropriate modifications) by most couples to enhance their marriage. Our explanations can be helpful when combined with how we model our own experiences and our own lives. Do be careful about the language you use, and if some language doesn't work or has negative consequences, try something else until you find some language that does work.

We don't need to talk about discipline spanking, it is a selective practice available only to some. We can talk about intention; we can say that we have designed our own relationship in a way that works for us as a

couple; we can say that it is our own choice in how we as a couple in marriage have chosen how to explore the intricacies of the intimacy and love we share. We can explain or answer questions in a way that is not merely acceptable to those "not like us" but that appeals to them so much that they might even want to use aspects of our relationship as a model for themselves.¹⁶⁸

"THE ANCHOR OF LOVE" (3 MARCH 2004)

I have watched over the years so many say, "I am X and I still get spanked like a little girl." Or "Why do I need this?" Here is my take.

I believe for some, this is the most direct way to show they are loved and somebody gives a damn. As long as you are seeking, direction, love and support and not just *pain*. As long as you can tell the difference between being spanked and being hit. Then, why worry? The fact is *everybody* has something they need. Every relationship has some dynamic in it.

Spanking and domestic discipline can be incredibly intense, loving and freeing. I do not care how old or mature a woman is. How intelligent, capable or successful. Nearly *every* woman I have ever met still has a little girl inside her. Every woman I have ever met desires to feel safe, secure and loved. For some, that little girl only comes out in the quiet of the night. For others, that little girl comes out when she is safe in her lovers arms, or when she is with her children.

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Yet for some, that little girl only comes out after she has been shown there is somebody who loves and understands her. That understanding usually comes from somebody willing to put her over his knee and *show* her he cares. Someone who will say, "You are OK; your behavior is NOT; and I love you too much to allow you to get away with this."

That is OK too. Because if that is what it takes to make you feel secure, so you can face the world and deal. Then more power to you. We all need a center. For some it is having a partner who is willing to discipline you and be your anchor. For others like me, it is *being* that anchor. It is being needed in that special way and being able to show the person I love in the most direct way possible—I am here, it is OK and I am not going to let you fall.¹⁶⁹

"THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DOMINANT AND DOMINEERING" (6 MARCH 2004)

I think it is important to differentiate between dominant and domineering. In my mind, a dominant person is one who takes charge. The role of the dominant person in any relationship is as much mentor and guide as anything else. It is a responsibility. Domineering on the other hand seeks subjugation over submission and usually is based on severe insecurities and total lack of trust.

The reason I say insecurity is because they can not even trust those who love them to love them. They do not love themselves, they are incapable of accepting the love of

others. More, they are incapable of trust and letting go.

Dominance and submission is often referred to as a power exchange. Submission, even when taken, is still given willingly. Domineering and subjugation is just about power. Who has it, who loses it. That is, in my opinion, not at all about love and support. Domineering and subjugation are not about building, they are about tearing down. Not about growth but instead about destruction.¹⁷⁰

"DON'T TELL ANYONE I'M HERE!" (12 MARCH 2004)

Why do I feel guilty about reading *Taken In Hand*? And what is a middle-aged married mother of four doing dreaming about being ravished and taken in hand when she should be doing the ironing or starting dinner?

All my life, I've had a secret desire to be taken by one of those men you only meet in the pages of romantic fiction. You know the deal: from the moment our eyes meet I'm hooked, unable to resist him even if I'm furious with him for having this power over me. He's unfazed by my anger and approaches me with the certainty and confidence you never meet in real life. Just when I think he hadn't got it in him to win the battle, he wins the battle, drawing me to him, crushing me in his strong arms, ravishing me, subduing me, taking me, making me his, loving me, leading me.

Instead, I have a very nice husband who cares about me and looks

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after me and the kids... I guess I've always thought the reality can't match the fairytale, the real man can't match the romantic hero... and then I stumble upon a site like this and have my cosy assumptions turned upside down in the click of a mouse.

I'm not like you: I'm not brave and sure and honest and comfortable with my outlandish desires. I'm just an ordinary woman in an ordinary marriage with ordinary sex and ordinary love. I don't have the passion I read about here, and I don't have the romantic hero Taken In Hand men appear to be. Are you guys for real? Is it really possible? Have I made a godawful mistake in my life in settling for the man I married?

I'm not enamoured with everything I read on Taken In Hand. I have no desire to be spanked or caned or disciplined like a kid. I'm just an ordinary woman not a masochist or a powerhouse of sexual fires. And yet..... something's missing in my life and I appear to be reading Taken In Hand to find out what that something is. When I noticed I feel edgy and impatient that there hasn't been a new article posted for a few days, that told me this is a pretty strong fix I'm getting, here. But I feel I shouldn't even be here; that I don't belong here; or that I shouldn't belong here.

I can't say I know what my point is. I don't know why I'm writing this really. I don't know what to do and I don't know what I should want to do. What am I doing dreaming impossible dreams and reading of other women who *have* the impossible dream? Don't tell anyone I'm here. I

shouldn't be here: I'm just an ordinary mother of four who should be doing the ironing.¹⁷¹

"SUBJUGATION OR SUBMISSION?" (13 MARCH 2004)

If a woman submits to me out of duty, I don't want her. A robot can do a duty, and I have no desire for a robot. A mechanical submission is simply subjugation, and that isn't what any man here would want. This submission must come wholly from the heart. That kind of submission by its very nature demands a love and caring from the man it's given to. If the woman is sick or just not feeling well or whatever, the man will tend to that need. He won't force anything on her, anymore than the woman will fake a headache to escape sex, as happens too often in the "currently conventional" relationships. I don't fully understand the dynamics, but this is my take on the subject.¹⁷²

"THE JOY OF THE MASTER-QUEEN DYNAMIC" (13 MARCH 2004)

Since my husband became head of our home and our relationship, he just can't do enough to make me happy. I'm still trying to figure out exactly why this dynamic works the way it does. Before I became submissive, I was sure he didn't care about my feelings. He would create problems for me by leaving important things undone. It just didn't seem like he cared enough to make the effort. He didn't want to be reminded of his responsibilities, or

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asked to do anything more. How could a man really care about me and yet care so little about making me happy? Yet I knew he loved me. I knew he wanted me to be happy. He often said so, and he often expressed his love very convincingly in words and lovemaking. So why not in particular, important actions? This was so puzzling and frustrating to me.

A piece of the puzzle fell into place when I realized how important self-determination is to him. He has to do things because he wants to. He has to take on responsibilities and obligations freely; once he's taken them on, he'll just about kill himself to meet them. But if he feels the responsibility or obligation foisted on him from without, he just won't accept it. He just won't do it, even if it's something "everyone does" or "a good husband does". If he hasn't chosen it, you can just forget it. I could beat my head against a wall until I went unconscious trying to get him to do things that I thought he should do because everyone else's husband does that, or because it's only fair, or whatever.

When he became the head of the household and of our relationship, there was a shift in the way he viewed himself, and me, and our home, and our life. He seems to have a heightened sense of ownership, a heightened sense of being the man of the house, and a sudden willingness to do things. Suddenly he wants to help me with the dishes and make the bed! He seems to feel that everything is more "his" than it was before: me, the house, the money. And it is indeed more his, in the

sense that he has more control over all those things.

Ownership is basically *having control over*. Although we use the word "mine" to describe things that are merely connected with us, real possession implies control. I believe the sense of ownership ties us (his home and family) to his self-determination somehow. We are not so much things outside himself, demanding onerous duties; we are part of him, and doing things for us is more like doing things for himself. Furthermore, being in command means he makes decisions and carries them out. He does things because he decides they should be done, not because I told him about them or reminded him of them.

What does it mean to own another human being? Obviously, slavery springs to mind as an ugly institution that has fortunately been mostly stamped out. To own a person as if the person were an object, having total control over their destiny and no regard for their feelings, is obviously not good. But when a person desires to be possessed by another, this can be wonderful.

I must tread carefully here, because I really don't understand the attraction of being a "slave", and I don't want to talk about what I don't know. I only wish to note that, like so much of what we talk about on this site, it is the voluntary aspect that changes night into day.

Everything we talk about here in terms of submission, ownership, slavery, discipline—it's all beautiful because both parties desire it. All of it would be shocking and horrible if one party didn't want it. I think it's

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that contrast that makes it erotic and that makes it such a tender gift, a breathtaking, awe-inspiring gift to the one who receives it. Because power implies the power to hurt, the gift of submission is a gift of awesome trust, it's a tremendously powerful statement saying, "I believe that you are good." I could not give my husband the authority to discipline me physically unless I believed, down to my bones, that he would never, ever abuse that right, i.e., use it to harm me. And I could not give my husband control over our financial life unless I believed, deep down, that he would steer us right. He is a good man, and there is no more powerful way that I can tell him so than to freely give him the power to take care of me, which is also the power to hurt me and bring me to ruin.

The gift, of course, is not irrevocable, but we like to think of it so. There is always the possibility of leaving if our partner turns bad. Our society thankfully recognizes the equal humanity of women. But like an acrobat at the circus, we think about what we're doing and how wonderful it feels; we know the net is below us, but we don't want to dwell on it. To keep our minds on it ruins what we're doing.

I liked KrosRogue's little piece* defining submission and subjugation. When a person is made a slave to another's will by force, obviously this is not a dynamic of love. There is no trust and no gift. Under other legal systems, women are, or have

been, subjugated to men by law (which is force). You can still have good men in such a system (at least if the romance novels are to be believed!). A woman could still submit from love, and a good man could take good care of her. But the possibility of giving—and receiving—her submission as a gift would be lost. You can't give him something that belongs to him already. So only in the context of women being legally equal to men can submission truly be a gift. Only against this background of legal equality is the real beauty of our lifestyle possible.

A man sees himself reflected in the eyes of his woman. She can make him look small, incompetent, and weak. Or she can make him look strong, heroic, larger than life, a good man and true. And seeing himself so, he can be all that. In this way, her submission and trust make him a hero. A hero who holds her happiness and well-being in his hands. He will cherish that happiness and well-being above everything—above his own, perhaps—because that hero in her eyes is worth more to him than money, status, or his own comfort. This is the dynamic of the master and his queen. He cannot do enough for her because of the way she sees him.

I didn't see myself as a controlling woman, but I suppose I was. It's not a bad thing to be; it all depends on the circumstances. Sometimes a woman's survival depends on it. But when a woman would be happier if she had less control and she still ~~won't~~ give it up, I think it's because she was wounded at some point. Perhaps she was orphaned in child-

* "Subjugation or submission?" 13
March 2004.

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hood, or abused, or abandoned by her parents. Perhaps she was hurt in adolescence by selfish, uncaring men. Whatever happened, something convinced her that she was on her own, that if she didn't take care of herself, no one would. She is, you might say, a woman warrior in a hostile world.

When a woman like this submits to a man and gives him control of her life, is this not a truly awesome gift? She is telling him that he inspires enough trust to overcome all her doubts. Is this not a much greater gift than the submission of an untroubled girl who has been cherished all her life?

I realize now that when I was in control, the image I reflected back to my husband was the image of someone not entirely necessary, not entirely competent, not worthy of my trust and confidence. And he lived like that person. Now we are both transformed.¹⁷³

"THE FACE, THE MASK, AND THE DREAM" (14 MARCH 2004)

Everyone has a dream mate, the ideal and ultimate partner to fulfil a lifetime fantasy. That rarely, if ever, happens in real life. When you have a relationship with someone, you actually relate to three persons; the one you wish to see, or the dream, the one you think you see, or the mask, and the real person, or the face behind the mask.

The spark usually, but not always, hits you when the dream comes very close to resembling the mask. Later, when you get better acquainted, you

see bits and pieces of the face. Then the mask seems to change, or shifts in appearance, and becomes less like the dream and more like the face. If this shift becomes too radical, you can become very disillusioned, because you can't tolerate the difference between the mask and the dream, you can't allow this person to be human, because there is too much that clashes with the dream.

Most broken relationships come to a tragic end because they are allowed to become too deep too fast, while the mask still looks like the dream. Ideally, you want to see the face, but that rarely happens even in the most intimate of relationships. But it's good to wait until you are pretty sure the mask at least bears some close resemblance to the face.¹⁷⁴

"WHEN RAPE IS A GIFT" (15 MARCH 2004)

I know, I know, it's a dangerous title, and I'll get hate mail. So let me say straight away that on no account do I advocate or in any way condone rape or abuse of any kind. Indeed, I urge all women (and men!) to use whatever force is necessary to defend themselves against would-be rapists, muggers and murderers. The last stranger in the street to be so misguided as to think that I would make a good rape victim probably didn't end up in hospital, but judging from his screams as I incapacitated him, and the way he staggered as he made his escape, he probably regretted having picked me to mess with.

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The sort of “rape” that is a gift is the sort given by a man to the woman he loves *because she wants it*. Many women do.

Many men reading this will be feeling very uneasy. Nothing is guaranteed to bring a man out in a cold sweat faster than raising the subject of rape—except actually asking him to rape you, of course. “Oh, I could never do that!”, a man will say in a tone of alarm. No decent man wants to be a rapist.

But it's not rape and it's not immoral if the woman wants it. Is it?

It's a gift.

I have talked to a number of women about this over the years, and several have spoken of the deep gratitude they feel to the man who trusts and loves them enough to do this. These are dangerous waters, legally, so the man must trust the woman not to run to the police and cry “rape!” He must have the strength to risk making himself vulnerable in this way. He must have faith that she knows what she wants and is willing to take the risk. He must believe in his ability not to misjudge the situation, and in the woman's ability to deal with it well if he does. He must be willing to be profoundly and intensely intimate with the other person. And for some men, contemplating such action forces them to face their own dark and troubling desires—desires they fear make them a monster. All this takes courage, strength, trust, and nerves of steel. Not for the faint-hearted!

And not something to do cavalierly. Extreme caution is advised. If you are not careful, your gift could

be the psychological equivalent of a lethal letter bomb. Do not proceed in haste. Be sure to discuss it thoroughly first, to ensure that, as one woman put it, you are on the same page. If she wants more of a set scene at an agreed time but you think she wants you to take her completely by surprise—such as by creeping up on her in the dead of night when she thinks you are on a business trip two continents away—things might not go quite as well as you'd hoped. When in doubt, discuss it explicitly and in great detail first. And assume that the two of you might be mistaken about it all, and be ready to back-track, make changes, and (if you both desire it) try again.

But enough of all that. How can it possibly be a gift? What might be going through a woman's mind before, during and afterwards? How does she feel?

How she feels beforehand depends upon the individual circumstances, but she may well feel fear—and she may well *want* to feel fear. Her heart may be thumping, her adrenalin pumping, her mouth dry, her palms sweaty: an exhilarating sort of fear, not the fear of a victim. She may be experiencing the most intense desire to be taken she has ever felt: a desire made only more intense the more strongly she resists and fights.

She may feel the need to fight as hard as she can, while willing you to prevail. When you do, the physical shock may be indescribably exquisitely pleasurable. She may feel as though she has billions of nerve-endings she had never had before. She may have the most intense climax she has ever had. She may

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scream as you have never heard her scream before. You may notice that her whole body suddenly relaxes, submitting, welcoming, worshipping. The whole experience may leave her feeling absolutely ecstatic, utterly peaceful, deeply submissive, totally yours. Connected. You may see in her eyes deep love, reverence, awe, soft submissiveness, deep gratitude, adoration, and belonging. She may well be moved to tears.

Hold her. Stroke her hair. Kiss her softly. You have taken her. She is yours.¹⁷⁵

"FROM VAGUE AWARENESS TO A BEAUTIFUL RELATIONSHIP" (18 MARCH 2004)

Let me think... back then we rode around on dinosaurs and, more importantly, there was no Internet. This has major implications in the development of my sexuality. People with non-standard sexual tastes could easily go through their whole lives thinking of themselves as uniquely weird deviants. One might never realize that there were others with similar feelings. One might never experience the satisfaction of hearing somebody else putting into words those hard to express feelings. I was alone.

I was vaguely aware that I was turned on by spanking because of my reaction to the spanking scene in Robert Heinlein's *I Will Fear No Evil* which I read in my early teens. I was uncomfortable with these feelings. I threw out my copy of the book. I don't think I ever talked about them with anyone for years.

I married when I was 21 and had my first child at 23. I don't think I could have committed to submission then. It didn't occur to either of us to put the word "obey" in the marriage vows. And yet, looking back, I can see it was attracting me. There were many things that I was unhappy with about myself. For example, I was easily angered and lacked self-discipline. I identified with Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew* and wanted a Petruchio to fix my personality flaws. It probably would have been too unreasonable to place such a burden on my husband when we were young. And yet, in the long run, my husband did become my Petruchio.

He grew into his authority. Or maybe I grew into seeing it. Over time, I came to think of him more and more as a strong, wise, good person. I respected him, trusted his judgement and learned to turn to him for guidance.

Meanwhile, perhaps ten or so years ago, I got plugged into the Internet and discovered the world. Among my discoveries was the knowledge that being turned on by spankings was a fairly mild kink and I was able to tell my husband about it. It became part of erotic play for us but recently has developed into something more. I had a growing awareness that I didn't want to just play at spanking. Somehow, my husband physically disciplining me embodies his authority over me. It has become real, not a game and I still don't quite understand what is happening. Whatever it is touches me very deeply.¹⁷⁶

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"DOES BEING TAKEN IN HAND MEAN NOT SAYING WHAT YOU THINK?" (20 MARCH 2004)

Some think that being taken in hand implies not expressing your opinions or indeed expressing yourself.

Elle has been taught from the beginning: I chose you for your mind and strength and you are cheating me if you don't give it to me. I do insist that it be done with respect and I also insist that when I say ENOUGH, she accepts it as enough.

Without ego, I am a person with a great deal of intelligence, intellect, and of course at times arrogance. Which means when I am wrong. I can be spectacularly wrong. I require somebody smart enough to know when I am wrong, strong enough to tell me and sweet enough to make me like it. Oh well, 2 out of 3 ain't bad.¹⁷⁷

"TAKEN IN HAND RELATIONSHIPS ARE HOT AND CLOSE" (22 MARCH 2004)

Taken In Hand relationships are pretty special. The three things I want in a relationship, I have in abundance with my wife. I believe it's because we have a Taken In Hand relationship. What are those three things? Love, sex, and intimacy. It's that simple.

The intimacy and love come because the Taken In Hand relationship is so sexy. When you feel sexually satisfied, you feel a whole lot of love for your spouse and you show your love and want to make your spouse happy. When you feel

sexually satisfied, you want to talk to your spouse and that brings intimacy. So the bottom line is, it's about making great relationships by creating sexual heat between you.

There's nothing more erotic to me than to know that my wife loves being in this relationship with me. There's nothing more erotic than knowing she's always available for me if I want sex. She says there's nothing more sexy than being available to me, so we have a win-win situation here. Just knowing I can take her whenever I want... it's what other men dream of. Just knowing that when I take her, she'll submit and open her legs for me and she's excited and willing every time... other folks have talked about a sense of peace, but let me tell you, THIS is peace. There's no greater satisfaction than this. This submission from my wife is the greatest gift.

My wife commented that my dominance is the greatest gift to her. She's wired to respond sexually to it and can't get enough of it. I wouldn't say she's obedient, but she's pretty happy with how we're doing so there's no fights or stonewalling. The more I make decisions for her (taking her wishes into consideration every time) the more dreamy-eyed she gets. I love it when she looks at me like I'm her hero.

When I tell me wife to be sure and take enough time for pampering herself after a hard day, seeing the look in her eye—love, submission and “you're my hero”—does it for me. This is great: this kind of dominance—Taken In Hand protective, caring dominance—turns my wife on big time and makes her happy.

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And when you've got a turned on, happy wife, you have a happy, satisfied husband!¹⁷⁸

"THE DYNAMICS OF OUR TAKEN IN HAND RELATIONSHIP" (25 MARCH 2004)

I want the man I love to be the head of our household and physically discipline me because it's highly erotic for me; it evokes a desire to submit to him and please him that strengthens our connection. In turn, his experience of power and control evokes a desire to protect me and make me happy that also strengthens our connection. These yin and yang desires reinforce each other, making more and more room in our minds for love and intimacy.

That's the reason we use discipline, and it's the only reason we do. It's not because I'm immature and faulty and can be improved only by external force. It's not because he's mature and perfect and it's his job to help me grow up. These were the implications that bothered me when I read about DD (domestic discipline), that I found insulting to women and just didn't ring true. In fact, I firmly believed that he was less mature and more faulty than me (he might have a different take on that). So why would I want him to discipline me? I believe, actually, that people tend to choose partners who are approximately equal to themselves in attractiveness, intelligence, maturity, and moral stature. Why would a man want to burden himself with a life partner who is immature and morally weak compared to himself?

But if I don't need him to improve me, how is it real discipline? I think the answer is that in our complex personalities, both male and female, there is always a part that matures and a part that remains more child-like. When I do something to disrupt our relationship, and he disciplines me, the mature, moral, controlled part of his psyche connects with my childish, naughty, impulsive self. This inner little girl really wants to be controlled, and when disciplined, becomes submissive, adoring, and grateful. The sexual dynamic between these two parts of ourselves is highly positive, and can bring us back together when we drift apart. Even if the disruption is his fault, or no one's fault, I will eventually give him some cause (some excuse, if you like) to take me in hand and put this dynamic into motion.

Of course I also have a mature, adult self, and he also has an inner child. But when these two clash, the sexual dynamic is totally different. "Cold and dead" might be a good description. His inner child resists control, becoming sulky and stubborn. My adult self doesn't thrive on being in charge; I become exhausted and unhappy. When there is a problem in the relationship, the grown woman and the little boy just piss each other off and make things worse.

It's not necessary to totally shut down these parts of ourselves—we wouldn't be healthy and whole if we did. He wouldn't want to live without my grown-up intellect, and I wouldn't want to live without his childlike sense of fun. But when it comes to issues of control, or any

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kind of dissonance, we need to acknowledge that the woman-boy dynamic only drives us further apart. We must turn to the big man and the little girl to bring back harmony.

Does his discipline improve my behavior? Actually, yes. Because it feels really sexy for me to obey him and be improved by him. For most of my adult life I have relied on my own adult self to control my inner child. I didn't ask Paul to spank me because I was failing, as a mature adult, to control myself. But I have ways of punishing myself when I screw up that aren't good for our relationship. I beat myself up mentally. I chastise and berate myself, put myself down, and generally make myself miserable in the hope that this misery will motivate me to avoid repeating that screw-up. This kind of self-punishment isolates me and makes my family unhappy too. A sound spanking, on the other hand, relieves guilt, provides motivation, and gets me reconnected to my family very quickly. I get back into a positive and constructive frame of mind instead of wallowing.

I think that Paul gets something from disciplining me that improves him, too. I think that being in charge of our home and our relationship is maturing him, making him hold himself to a higher standard, giving him more strength to control his own destructive impulses. My adoring submission to his mature self is so rewarding that the mature self grows stronger.¹⁷⁹

"MOVING INTO A TAKEN IN HAND RELATIONSHIP" (26 MARCH 2004)

I wanted a relationship where we were both equals, and took joint responsibility for everything. When I met my now husband, we tried it: he thought that was how a marriage should be run, too. And it kind of worked for a while, but it got to the stage where even simple things like washing up would wait til one of us gave in and did it: with neither of us having any ownership over tasks, decisions, etc., it seemed that things were less likely to get done. Which led to arguments, which led to us making up, but somehow never talking about it afterwards, so the arguments repeated. And we couldn't quite see what was going wrong.

And then we started to introduce spanking into erotic play, which unleashed a torrent of very suppressed feelings in me. I'd be lying if I said they were new, but I had tried to suppress them since I was in my early-mid teens, and I did initially try to kid myself that they were new feelings. So after a while, I started to come to some of sort of acceptance that as well as having a strong, independant character I was also possessed of a large submissive streak, at least when I was around my husband.

So one evening, whilst I was cooking and he was doing something else, I muttered something about maybe if he gave me a spanking next time I started to get really snappy it might stop me quicker than the then only technique that did work—going off and sulking for a while til I

felt human again. He agreed, and tried it—cautiously at first for various reasons, and then with more gusto—especially when it seemed it did work.

After a little while more, I told him more about how I feel, what I think I want, and touched on a whole mountain of confusion inside (did it in a really mature way, too—sent him an e-mail then hid til he'd read it *L*). He took on board almost suspiciously quickly, as if he'd been patiently waiting for me to realise something he'd noticed, and he worked on some of my confused thoughts.

Now, we both have semi-defined roles: we don't know what tomorrow will bring, so some flexibility is needed. There are one or two things that are understood as being so. For example, I'm the only one who gets spanked. And the difference was and is incredible. There have been a couple of moments since we started that would normally have led to a blow-up of one sort or another, that have now been resolved in under an hour. We both feel so much closer to each other, and everything has improved no end. In ways I still can't get my head around, submitting to my husband has empowered me to be my softer self around him, to shed the protection I need for the outside world and relax. I feel grounded, relaxed, calm; he seems far less stressed and also seems more relaxed and calm.

I am still confused about a lot of things, but I'll sort those out with time. I'm content just being me, and submitting to my husband...¹⁸⁰

"EQUALITY ISN'T ALL IT'S CRACKED UP TO BE" (27 MARCH 2004)

On Power and Love I found reference to this film review by Steve Sailer:

In "Dentists," the husband ... seems hemmed-in, his manliness encumbered by all the domestic trappings. Nor does it enhance what's left of his aura of masculinity that he and his wife ... are equal partners in their dental firm, and that when they get home, he does half (or more) of the housework. The audience, therefore, is less surprised than he is when he glimpses his wife in the arms of another man, perhaps the director of the amateur opera in which she's appearing as a slave girl. ...

As so often happens in feminist-influenced movies, the words don't match the pictures. Scott, who also produced, claimed that the wife falls for another man because her husband is "uncommunicative," but his character hardly has any time to communicate. While she's running around, he cooks all the meals and cleans up all the messes, which only appears to make her more contemptuous of him.

Instead, Rudolph's images subvert the script's conventional explanations with a disturbing idea: the perfect equality of their marriage has sapped the sexual energy from it. Because he has no power over her, she doesn't find him exciting...

Tom Newman comments *inter alia*:

I think most Americans know down deep by now that "equal" marriage does not work and that women want the man to lead. At some point, we will all start admitting it in public.

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I don't think all women want the man to lead (some prefer women anyway ;-)) but for those who do, an overtly equal marriage would be less likely to work.

Moreover, not all forms of equality are equal. The so-called "unequal" relationship favoured by Tom and many readers of Taken In Hand is in a very real sense more equal and consensual than many a so-called "equal" and pro-feminist relationship. Plenty of pro-feminist New Men create the mere semblance of consent whilst acting in highly non-consensual ways.

Consider a relationship between an ardent radical/victim feminist and a New Men who stridently advocate "equality", and who would be quick to brand us "unhealthy", or "reactionary" or "atavistic" and the like. In some cases, of course, they have a genuinely good relationship. But in other cases, if you look beyond what they *say* to what they *do*, what you find is that one or other of the two (or both!) passively-aggressively imposes his or her will on the other, not just occasionally and not just in fun or in an otherwise consensual way.

Their relationship appears *prima facie* to be very fair and equal and consensual but it is just the semblance of equality, a sham; the form is equal and fair, but the substance is highly non-consensual. People can be very intransigent and fail to take their partner's wishes into account, whilst appearing to be models of equality and caring. People often proclaim their belief in equality whilst making life miserable for their partner through apparently

nice but really toxic passive-aggressive behaviour.

The reason this is important for readers of Taken In Hand is that one of the criticisms levelled at us (apart from the usual vacuous "this is unhealthy" rubbish) is that relationships of this sort can't be good *because they are not equal*.

There is nothing particularly good about equality *per se*, because what one person might like, another might hate—it might be better for person A to get X and person B to get Y—both might be happier with that than if A and B both have Z. What people mean when they advocate equality—or rather, what they *should* mean—is that there should be consent.

To judge whether or not there is consent, you can't just look at the form of a relationship or an interaction and get a reliable answer. For some people *positively want* a relationship which to the outside world looks unequal and quite possible non-consensual. It might appear that way but be incredibly consensual and a source of great joy and personal growth to both partners. It is not merely that you can't judge a book by its cover, you can be wildly misled by the "cover" when the "book" is the kind of relationship discussed on Taken In Hand. What we have to remember is that it is the consensual substance that matters, not the non-consensual form.¹⁸¹

**"WHAT TAKEN IN HAND HAS DONE FOR
OUR MARRIAGE" (28 MARCH 2004)**

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Since my husband acted to end the downward spiral of resentment and recriminations that was our marriage, our lives have been turned around. Only a few months ago we were barely speaking to each other, and when we did, it was to attack. Like I've heard is the case for many, when I first asked him to take me in hand, nothing happened, but then suddenly one day something snapped in him and he put me over his knee and spanked me so hard it shocked me.

That was only a few months ago but my, how things have changed. He wants to spend time with me now, where before, he spent all his time in the basement avoiding me. He pays so much more attention to me than previously, noticing when I've made the effort to dress femininely for him or when I've made a special effort to bake his favorite pie. He looks at me the way he looked at me when we first met—he *really* looks at me. I feel he sees me now where before, he seemed to look right through me or past me.

He's become a real gentleman, taking care of my needs, very respectfully. He smiles at me and seems to enjoy being with me again. When he takes me out he helps me on and off with my coat. I feel so proud to be with him! I can see other women looking envious when they see how he treats me like a princess. Since I asked him to take me in hand and be the master of the house, he's started making decisions more, and he's become much more confident in this—a much better leader—and this, I find sexy, so our love life is way better than before. I have a new

respect for him as the head of our household, I have a new love for him as my husband, and I have this renewed desire for him as a man. In fact, we're like newlyweds again.

My husband has always been a good dad but now he's a great one. He is so much more involved with the kids, now, so everybody's happy.

This has changed my whole outlook on life. Where before, I felt a failure, unworthy, distrustful, unattractive, now I feel good about myself. I feel attractive, I feel loved, cherished, and worthy of that love. I deeply trust my husband and feel he trusts me too. I feel a sense of belonging to him I've never felt before. He's my husband, and I *belong* to him now. Before, I belonged only to myself and felt hurt by his coldness and his long sulks and angry outbursts. He was hurting too because I was not submitting to him but we didn't know this until things turned around for us. Hindsight is 20-20.

He'll say I'm more respectful and no longer make snide remarks to him. Most of all, I trust him and love him more than I ever thought I could love and trust anyone. That's what Taken In Hand has done for us.¹⁸²

"THE F-WORD" (28 MARCH 2004)

Feminism. It is almost as offensive to some people as the other F-word. I have seen it alleged many times that feminism is inconsistent with a Taken in Hand relationship. I do not think this is the case at all. I am definitely a feminist and I am not ashamed to admit it.

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People have this nostalgic view of life 50 or even 100 years ago as being the good old days when people stayed married and the roles in the family were straightforward, and when it was much more acceptable for a woman to be spanked by her husband. It is true that the divorce rate was low, but I am not at all convinced it is because people were happier. Divorce was simply not an option for women, especially after they had had children. There was no chance for women to get jobs that paid well enough to support a family. For much of our history, women could not own property and were considered the property of their husbands. Also, before women could vote or run for office, they had little or no way to influence the government decisions that affected them. I am a feminist because I believe in having these basic rights, and I would fight to keep them.

What has the feminist movement done for me? It has given me freedom of choice. I *choose* to live in marriage where my husband can take me in hand whenever he sees fit. I *choose* to give him final say on all decisions. Could I change my mind? Of course I could! I think that is where the value of our relationship lies. Because this is my own choice (in fact, it was I who asked him to take me in hand) I feel freer not more restricted in my relationship with my husband now that he is the head of the household. Our Taken in Hand relationship depends on my consent. If I were forced to live in a relationship which included spanking, it would be a fundamentally different relationship, however

similar it might appear on the surface. I would feel trapped. Spanking without consent is abuse as far as I am concerned. You cannot have real consent without the freedom to choose.

My choice to live in Taken in Hand relationship may seem on the surface to be unfeminist. In fact there are a lot of feminists who would be downright furious with me about this. It is almost as if these feminists want to deny me my choices rather than support me in them. Like those who opposed the feminist movement, these feminists seem to want to restrict my choices to what they deem acceptable. Just because I *can* choose not to consent to my husband being the head of the household, does not mean that I *must* choose this. We tried living in marriage without a head of the household: we shared the power equally. I was not happy; my husband was not happy. Now that my husband is the head of the household, we are happier than ever; we feel more loving and more connected. I know that the choice to be Taken in Hand is not for everyone, maybe not even for most, but it definitely is for me and I will not allow my freedom to choose to be restricted by anyone, feminist or sexist.

I am a feminist, and I am in a happy, loving Taken in Hand relationship, that I not only consent to, but was my idea in the first place. Feminism is not at odds with a Taken In Hand relationship in which the man is the head of the household: I know because I comfortably live with both.¹⁸³

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"HE WHO DARES, WINS" (28 MARCH 2004)

I've read a lot of personal stories in the past few weeks and I really want to share mine, because I promise you, it's a really great story!

I was excited to go hang out with a newly married girlfriend at the local Renaissance Faire that weekend. She and her husband picked me up and when we got there, he was working the faire, so we went to shop. Later on, we went back to watch him as he was helping put on a medieval fighting demo. He was in the ring in full medieval armor facing down another fighter, also disguised in full medieval armor.

The announcer says loudly to each fighter to bow to the one who gives you the courage to fight—and my girlfriend's husband turns and bows to her. (So cool!) But the other fighter didn't bow at all, I noticed. The fight ensued and my girlfriend's husband lost.

The other fighter had the right to stay in the ring then and fight the next guy, but he didn't. (This is where it gets really good.) He made a show of bowing out and turned to step over the ropes and strode over to us. (I should mention that it was a bit overwhelming to have this 6' medieval fighter make his way over to us!)

He removed his helmet, and standing there over me says: "I've killed your escort. You belong to me now." Then he just walked away.

I was stunned. Luckily though, my girlfriend encouraged me to go find him, because, well, I was certainly

interested in finding him. So I went to the changing tents and found him, all changed, sitting there relaxing—and waiting for me to come to him. I had had a chance to rehearse what I'd say so I delivered my line of: "If you're to possess me, I should know your name." He gave me a big (very nice) smile, stood up and shook my hand saying, "It's Jim." Then he didn't let go of my hand, and led me out of the tent suggesting a walk. We had a great time talking and flirting all around the faire.

When it came time to leave, he handed me a scrap of paper he had in his pocket and asked for my phone number. I looked down at the paper and it already had my name written on it! Apparently he had already asked who I was when I had arrived earlier, and written it down then.

I wrote down my phone number and as I handed it to him I said, "You were certainly sure that you'd get my number, weren't you?" To which he leaned in close and whispered in my ear: "I usually get what I want."

That was 12 years ago and we've been married 10 of those years.¹⁸⁴

"THE NATURE AND EFFECTS OF CONSENSUAL NON-CONSENT" (29 MARCH 2004)

Many couples find themselves often considering the nature of consensual non-consent in Taken In Hand dynamics and its impact on their relationship. Of course there is always the concern about abuse and its consequences. Often we see discussions about the reluctance of the

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disciplinarian to engage secondary to fears of legal retribution from their partner. This will not be my focus. If any of these kinds of fears or concerns are present, the necessary foundation of trust has not been developed for the kind of discussion I am about to embark upon, and Taken In Hand dynamics should not be used as a connective sexuality by any such couple.

The question of consensual non-consent comes up frequently in Taken In Hand discussions for two reasons, first, we all seek power and control. It is a natural thing for humans to want and need control over the many aspects of their lives. In many cases its enticement is more powerful than riches. Second, we all seek connection, deep intimate connections with at least one significant other human being. Most of what I say will be from a personal and a female point of view in a heterosexual relationship.

Submission being a common theme of Taken In Hand, it is hard for some to understand that we might actually want or need control in our lives, but it is evidenced in the very nature of our relationships. Women are the most common half of the couple to bring this to the forefront of discussion in their relationships, getting what they want to meet their needs and allowing them to flourish. Guiding their husbands down the domestic discipline track, so to speak. Once we have agreement about the structure of using discipline as a relationship dynamic we are then set to give consent.

The relationship between consent and the control we exercise is im-

portant in understanding consensual non-consent. We must have control to give up in the first place in order for this particular dynamic to occur. Consensual non-consent is about the man taking away the control the woman exercises, although temporary, in order to stabilize the relationship.

Once consent has been given and control is present the conditions for consensual non-consent can take place. At the foundation of non-consent is the taking away of control. In trying to understand the nature of why this non-consent is so powerful to me and other women—and I suppose to men also—I have put together a few ideas that make sense to me. Some of these ideas, I have gathered from personal experience, and others have shared their experiences with me. It is a collection of thoughts. Please understand that this is occurring during a discipline session for disruption of our relationship in some way. The goal of our discipline is reconnection not punishment. We believe behavior changes when we are recommitted to each other, not because of severity of punishment.

Consensual non-consent is a necessary step to deep intimacy for those of us who practice domestic discipline. It is a taking away of control that I am holding on to. My response to that loss of control is a positive surrender of all my resistance to the deepest level of intimacy. When that control is out of my hands I am at a place of total openness, amazing things can occur when this happens within the bounds of a loving, trusting relation-

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ship. The doors swing wide open, the resistance to everything between us just evaporates. My need for him is immense, and I go to him with an open mind and heart. After all, he has just taken me to a place that is highly risky, but has chosen to protect and care for me, not injure and hurt me. How can I not respond positively to a man who has my life and mind literally in his hands and chooses to keep me safe and protected because he cherishes me and what we share together? My response is deep and abiding love that binds us as nothing else can.

Another idea about the attraction of consensual non-consent that I have learned concerns the husband and his goals. When a breakdown occurs in a relationship neither member of the couple want the other to withdraw with anger and hurt. They both want resolution that meets the needs of each of them, but it is a difficult time. Resistance is high and feelings are angry or hurt, so it is hard to express the fact that we actually want our husbands to engage with us and participate rather than withdraw. A lot of the time we are actively resisting his attempts at resolution with our often very effective verbal skills, perhaps subconsciously afraid he will simply leave or go hide away choosing not to engage with us. At the same time we are fully ready to resist any attempts he makes to stop the confrontation by taking us in hand.

In healthy loving relationships where consent has been given and the husband knows he has the responsibility to protect the relationship, this is where consensual non-

consent comes into play. We are in no mood to accept this from him, but he is in the mood to give it and he does. The fact is we want it. It's what we hunger for, and most describe a deep thrilling response to the husband who will insert himself into the relationship in a powerful manner, taking us, some of us forcefully, in hand, thus cementing his commitment to protect what they both cherish. As a woman, I love this kind of expression in my partner, that he is that involved and committed to what we have. I like it that he will fight for it, I find that very erotic.

An example of just how this control is taken might help here. So let me share this.

Some women associate this with a physical fight to one degree or another. It need not be at all. My partner never wrestles me over his knee. It is just not acceptable. So how does he take control when it seems I have already given it? Once he has decided to discipline me, I am expected to do as he tells me. He will not let me get away with anything if I do not follow his directions exactly. When he asks for my hand, I had better give it to him.

Once when over his knee he asked for my hand. I like to keep it as a form of control, to move away or to manipulate the spanking. I did not want to give it to him, so I kind of whined and said noooooo. He did not argue at all, not a word. He simply reached for a really nasty paddle and applied it soundly to my bared bottom in three or four hard smacks. I gave him my hand immediately without any further argu-

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ment or whining. I knew he was in control.

If I put my other hand back over my bottom during the spanking, he starts the spanking over. In the corner I am to follow his directions, if I do not, I get spanked standing in the corner, and if I keep it up, I will find myself over his knee again for another spanking. It is quite powerful. If I am sassy, he deals with it too. I can feel the resistance to his gaining control slipping away, I do begin to yield to his authority. That is when we are able to reconnect, not before. He will not back down. If he did, I would be sorely disappointed. Do I resist on purpose? No, not really. Most of any resistance I have is pretty real in that it is how I feel—defiant or pissed off or feeling it is unfair. I need to get rid of this before I can really reconnect to him again and we can communicate. He knows this, thank goodness. What patience!!

Last but no less powerful is the erotic nature of all of this.

I cannot deny it. Connection and intimacy between a loving couple is by nature erotic. I am thrilled just thinking about him taking control away from me, and when it comes time for him to do it, I do not actually think about it a great deal because I am busy trying to keep it, but I know I want it to happen. If it did not, I would be disappointed. My journey would not be complete. When people speak of the responsibility of the head of household I think it is this, not so much when to spank or how to spank, but how to reach a place where the resistance to

intimacy is removed and the couple make the connection that binds.

Consensual non-consent is the pathway to the deepest form of intimacy. For the husband it expresses his commitment to protection and care of the relationship that is shared between a couple, for the wife it allows the removal of all resistance to intimacy and allows bonding at its deepest level.¹⁸⁵

“AN 1897 WOMAN’S ‘IDEAL OF MANHOOD’” (30 MARCH 2004)

Excerpts from *Manners for Men*, by Mrs Humphry, 1897;

“Like every other woman, I have my ideal of manhood. The difficulty is to describe it. First of all, he must be a gentleman; but that means so much that it, in its turn, requires explanation. Gentleness and moral strength combined must be the salient characteristics of the gentleman, together with that polish that is never acquired but in one way: constant association with those so happily placed that they have enjoyed the influences of education and refinement all through their lives. He must be thoughtful for others, kind to women and children and all helpless things, tender-hearted to the old and the poor and the unhappy, but never foolishly weak... his brain must be as fine as his heart, in fact. There are few such men; but they do exist. I know one or two. Reliable as rocks, judicious in every action, dependable in trifles as well as the large affairs of life, full of mercy and kindness to others, affectionate and well-loved in their homes, their lives are pure and kindly.

“It was once said by a clever man that no one could be a gentleman all

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round who had not knocked about the world and associated with all sorts and conditions of men, high and low, rich and poor, good and bad. Experiences like these are the processes for refining gold. The man who emerges unharmed from the fire of poverty and its associations, and who retains his independent manliness in relations with those high-placed, must have within him a fibre of strength that is the true essence of manliness. So many, alas, go down... And so many become obsequious and subservient, false to themselves, in dealings with those above them.

"Well, my ideal does neither. He is always true to himself, and "cannot then be false to any man." And he must have a sense of humour too, otherwise he would be far from perfect. How life is brightened by a sense of fun! Think of what breakfast, lunch, and dinner would be if all were to be as solemn and as serious as some folk would have it!

"If good manners are not practised at home, but are allowed to lie by until occasion calls upon their wearer to assume them, they are sure to be a bad fit when donned. ... Carelessness in dress and personal appearance amount to bad manners. ...

"It is not only young men whose standard of behaviour in the home is a low one. Masters of the house... who are terribly put out if anyone fails in duty to them, are sometimes conspicuously ill-bred in everyday matters. They are late for every meal, to the discomfort of other members of the family and the great inconvenience of the servants. Polite to the world outside, they are brusque and disagreeable in their manner at home: rough to the servants, rude to their wives, and irritable with their children. Sometimes a good heart and considerable family affection are hidden away behind all this, but the fam-

ilies of such men would be very glad to compound for a little less ... hidden goodness and rather more gentleness and outward polish...

"Were I asked to give a recipe for the formation of a good manner I should recommend an equal measure of self-confidence and humility as the first essential, then a considerable desire to please, tempered by self-respect which preserves from officiousness and that annoying air of "ingratiating" themselves that some men assume in society. There must be perfect self-possession, though in the very young this is scarcely expected, a little becoming shyness sitting very well upon them...

"When self-possession has been acquired it is well to add on to it the saving grace of gentleness. This quality is much misunderstood by men. In women they adore it; in themselves and other men they undervalue it. But women love gentleness in men. It is a most telling piece of the necessary equipment for society...

"Carlyle called the members of upper class society "amiable stoics" in reference to the equable serenity of countenance and calm self-possession of manner with which they accept those occasionally trying conditions of social life which necessitate self-denial in matters great and small... The man of perfect manners is he who is calmly courteous in all circumstances, as attentive outwardly to the plain and the elderly as he is to the young and the pretty."¹⁸⁶

"HOW I BECAME SUBMISSIVE" (1 APRIL 2004)

Care to hear how I got interested in being taken in hand?

Well, we'll have to go back a few years. Jim (my husband of ten years) and I had obtained the all-American

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dream: a house all our own in which to raise our little boy and little girl. Jim was working in construction and I had just landed my dream job in a very male-oriented industry, and I've been plugging away at it for about eight years.

THEN, three months after I start my dream job, I got pregnant! Big, big, unexpected surprise! And although the timing wasn't great, we believed that there was a reason this baby wanted to be part of our family.

Then 9-11 happened and the economy went all to hell. Jim wasn't working much at all and there were layoffs where I worked too. I can't say for sure, but being seven months pregnant probably saved my job. Our daughter was born in January and since Jim wasn't working, it made sense that he'd just stay home with our three kids instead of shelling out over \$200 a week on daycare.

Do you think a dominant man is appealing? Just give a man who absolutely adores his children a try! Jim was a great stay-at-home dad. I remember once I heard him singing our baby to sleep. He was singing the A-B-C song. Later, I asked him why he didn't sing a lullaby and he said, "Well, I know all the words to the A-B-C song."

Well, things were humming along just fine, but as any stay-at-home parent can tell you: You've Got To Get Out Of The House Sometime! And in Jim's case, he needed a challenge too. So he decided to go back to night school and learn to be a massage therapist. He graduated

with honors last October. THEN—last November, I got my pink slip.

It was in December, just after Christmas, that Jim sat me down and tried to explain to me *again* that I am not letting my family down. It wasn't my fault I lost my job. I needed to stop trying to control everything! And he didn't understand why I wouldn't/couldn't just trust him to provide for us. I think that because I was the sole provider for our family for two years, I'd taken on a very dominant role. (Let me be quite clear here, I was never dominant in respect to Jim personally—just dominant in respect to the household functions.)

Suddenly losing my salary made me realize that I didn't have a clue where I stood in our family dynamics any more. That's what made me start investigating being taken in hand. It was like therapy in a way. I felt tons of guilt and I knew I had to find a way to quit punishing myself. I found the Taken In Hand website and have positively devoured it. I kept reading for a couple of months, wondering if I could really let go and be submissive.

It was just a few weeks ago that I pointed out the Taken In Hand website to Jim. I told him to read it and let me know what he thinks. Then I waited. And waited. And waited, and the next time I noticed that he was on the computer, playing a stupid computer game, I sarcastically pointed out to him that if he has time to do that, maybe he could check out the Taken In Hand website.

Guess what? He shut down. Ignored me and dodged any refer-

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ences I made to whether or not he'd taken a look yet? (Huh—I wonder why?!) Ugh! What to do? Why wasn't he interested in something that I was really interested in discussing?

Back to the computer, reading some more, when I stumbled across many articles which gave advice on how to introduce this sort of relationship to your partner. One suggested that telling your husband to do this probably isn't the best way to show that you want to be submissive. Duh!

So I made a personal decision to just go ahead and act as if.... I figured it was a good plan. This way if I didn't like it I could quit without any punishment involved. Well—let me tell you—my husband noticed a change almost immediately! He asked why I was so agreeable at one point and I flat out told him, "I'm being submissive to you. I'd like it if you'd check out that website I told you about and maybe we could discuss this more later."

This time, he did go look it up and read a bit. And he tested my submissiveness a couple of times before he finally said, "You know, you do seem a lot happier!" He was right too. It was freeing and peaceful to just let go and trust him.

After a week or so we sat down and talked. I told him that I agreed with a lot of what I was reading. He said he could understand why I liked what I was learning, because what he discovered—and then proceeded to point out to me—is that we already have this sort of relationship, but without spankings. He pointed out how many different ways he's dominant and I'm submis-

sive—already (I cook his favourites; I perform any small errands he needs me to do; I rarely, if ever, deny him sex, etc.) And he went on to describe our marriage as a ship: he's the captain and I'm first mate. (I know he loved the pun on "mate".) And if the first mate doesn't carry out the orders of the captain then it's hard to keep the ship sailing. Similarly, if the captain doesn't listen to the first mate about the situations on the ship, he can't issue any orders effectively. (It's hard to write about his comparison, and I know I'm not writing it nearly as well as he explained it, but I did understand—which is what counts.)

He said if I wanted him to really take everything over, he'd certainly comply—he had no problem with that. And at one point, during our talk, he did mention that if I'd like to keep making the effort not to fight him on certain things—obey just a little more—well, than that would be great!

So I did tell him that relinquishing control over our finances (which is always an issue of distress in our relationship) was something I needed to do. I also told him that I'd really try to listen to him, respect him and obey him more. And I asked for his help in my never-ending diet and exercise quest (which is something I have never done before). I'm so happy to report that he stepped right up to the plate, and started asking about our current bills, when paychecks come in and all about our present budget. Plus he's got some great ideas of some new ways to get me out walking more. (One in particular: he wants to drop me off so

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many miles from home in the mornings, on his way to work, so he knows I'll have to walk those miles to get back home.)

And just because I had to know why he wasn't interested in spanking me, I asked and he answered that he respects me too much to raise his hand to me, but if ever I act so poorly as to lose his respect, he said, "it's good to know that that option is there."¹⁸⁷

"SURRENDERING TO THE MAN I NEARLY DESTROYED" (3 APRIL 2004)

I believe in telling the self the brutal, honest truth. I am a recovered *abuser*. I am a woman. To understand this journey, and the dynamics of my intimate relationship, I have to give some history of my own past. My mother emotionally, mentally, and physically abused me. I grew up watching the only female role model I had emotionally abuse my dad. I thought this was normal. In conjunction with this modeling of a relationship, my mother always taught me that any man who asserts his rights to happiness and peace is a domineering abuser. This was my life's truth until I was about 20. Why until then, and not further? A little more history.

When I was 17, I moved across the country to go live with my soul mate. We had met two and a half years previously, and he is four years older than I. The reason we call each other soul mates isn't because we haven't had trials and tribulations. Our life hasn't been all peachy. The reason we call each other soul mates

is because the moment we met, we both knew that we would spend the rest of our lives together. If we had known how painful the years between 1995 and 1998 were going to be, we probably both would have run from each other. As I understand it now, I was attracted to his quiet authoritative presence. He made me feel safe and protected. He has confided in me that he could see that I was a beautiful soul trapped behind very thick walls and that something was very wrong in my life.

So why were those three years hell? I was abusive to this wonderful man. I emasculated him to the point of constant fear of me. This knowledge makes me sick to my stomach. How could I have done that to him? How could I have taken someone so strong and completely destroyed him? He let this endless rage and patterning of our relationship continue for two years. I knew something was wrong, but didn't see that I was the problem. After he became totally unresponsive to me, I went out and purchased a journal to write down what I perceived his imperfections were. Every last one of them. He soon started to read my entries, and I thought this was good. This way he could see that it was important that he change, because I had bothered to write down all of his shortcomings. After a while of doing this, he asked me why I only wrote negative stuff in that book. So, I began writing positive stuff. There were very few entries. After a while a sort of quiet tension settled over our home. This tension melted away at a very distinct time. He had rec-

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ognized the pattern of abuse, and found the cycle.

While I was in the “everything is wonderful” phase, he handed me that journal and asked me to read it all the way through. When I was done, I was still not ashamed of what I had done to him. He asked me very pointedly and quietly how *I* would feel if *I* had spent three years hearing and reading those awful things directed at *me*. I thought about it and truthfully told him that it would break my heart and I would not trust that person. That it was abuse.

I have to admit, after three years of that kind of treatment, confronting me was very brave. We both worked on my attitudes and behaviors toward him and our relationship. We learned how to argue constructively and how to come to a resolution at the end of the conflict. He was still very afraid of me. Not in the sense of abusive behavior anymore, but in the sense that he was very afraid of my disapproval, fearing the loss of love. I didn’t understand, I didn’t see it.

About a year after we had been married, he told me a secret that could and would have ruined most relationships. When he told me this secret he thought he had already lost me, so there wasn’t much more damage he could do to himself by telling me. The secret itself isn’t important; what is important is that because of the keeping of this secret, there was no trust and we were not advancing into a truly happy existence together. I understood the psychology behind this type of secret, how it eats away at a relationship.

Of all the possible reactions he imagined, he did not even give himself the possibility of my accepting this revealed thing. Because I reacted in a way he did not expect, he was still unsure of our relationship, and didn’t trust that I meant what I had said. It has taken years of repeated assurances that I found this secret to be ok and I truly did not have a problem with it. Once he realized this, more desires came out. Not just from him, but from myself. We began to communicate wants and needs that we both thought the other would be repulsed by. This built more trust between us.

Over the last couple of years we both have expressed a desire for him to be more dominant. We didn’t know how to get there though. The only place he felt safe expressing dominance was in the erotic realm. This sated a need we both had.

Over the past year, he has been on the other side of the world (physically, not emotionally). I have had the opportunity to really examine my husband, our relationship, and myself. The really great thing about this necessary arrangement is that communications have opened up, widened. The dam has been opened. I began to express to him a need for more of his control in my life. But how to give that control when I would not willingly submit to it? I started reading everything about BDSM I could get my hands on. We talked about the aspects of D/s. Parts of it bothered both of us, but what was attractive was the flow of power. I continued reading and searching the web for an acceptable

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answer. Somehow I ended up here, at Taken in Hand. I read everything. I instinctively understood the concepts and feelings of others here. So I sent the link to this site to my husband. The next time we talked we both had questions to ask each other; we talked about the difference in erotic and punishment spankings, how to distinguish between the two; we talked about consenting to non-consensual punishment—we talked over every aspect we could think of.

He finally told me that a self-destructive behavior that I have been engaging in has been hurting him deeply and I agreed immediately to begin giving him control over this area. As we are currently in a forced long-distance relationship, we decided what to do now to begin the adjustment. I report every night on this. It hasn't been easy, but I learned a very long time ago not to lie to him. I am more afraid of disappointing him than of any punishment he could devise. After a few weeks of this constant accountability to him, he confided that since I surrendered in this one area, he has felt the anger at watching the situation slip away. He no longer asks himself what he is doing wrong. He feels empowered. He asked me if there were other areas I needed his help in. I told him there were other areas I did need help in. I told him there were probably areas I didn't know I needed help in. I asked him to really examine his feelings on my behaviors and habits, and that anywhere he felt powerless was an area that I needed help.

I have come to realize that just because I think everything is well,

doesn't mean he thinks everything is ok. I have come to see how this can continually undermine a relationship, eating at the foundations, while everything else is still strong and in place. I have come to realize he doesn't want to completely control every little aspect of my life, but he does want me to be a better person, a person who will be happy and fulfilled in life, a person who won't let literal self-destruction bring her to an early end.

I want him to soar with joy, happiness, peace and the sense of power. I had been asking him to fix things without giving him the tools that would best accomplish the task. We are both excited and even a little bit scared at this new direction. I have had a sense of peace settle over me. I have noticed in my husband's writings that he has come to use the passive voice less and less. I can now recognize when something is truly a request, or a command phrased as a request.¹⁸⁸

"WHY TAKEN IN HAND ISN'T ACTUALLY UNFAIR" (5 APRIL 2004)

The recent comments about switching have got me thinking about accountability in a Taken In Hand style relationship, and the apparent inherent unfairness of the discipline. Even once you've got past the fact that both partners have agreed to it, the fact that one person gets disciplined (be it physical or not) and the other just apologises can still, from the outside, look wrong. It just doesn't look right that one person—usually the woman—

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takes more blame for any transgression than the other does. Surely the man, if he is truly the head of household, and not just a bully, should take equal or greater responsibility for his actions? And can it be truly said he does if, for example, he gets to spank his wife if she misbehaves, but she doesn't get to spank him if he doesn't?

Well, yes, to be honest. The situation is not unlike a company with a CEO and their second in command. The CEO has the most power but also the most responsibility, and so on—see also this explanation. Now I've always been happy with this analogy, as far as it goes, but there's been a nagging feeling that there's more to it than this, that goes beyond the simple consensual agreement of the couple.

Well, recently something occurred to me. This may only be true for my relationship—it's certainly the only I can speak of with first hand knowledge. We've tried switching—we sort-of tried it before we'd gone all that far into a DD relationship. And it didn't really work. My husband quite enjoys erotic spankings, but it just felt odd—and wrong—if I spanked him for discipline purposes. Neither of us got any closure from it. So, we stuck with what's now our current arrangement—if I'm out of line, I get spanked and if he is, he apologises. What occurred to me was why this works for us.

Our rows, by and large, have followed a set pattern. It blows up very quickly, and the most violent part is over fairly quickly. But it takes a long time for it to fully subside. And that's usually because of two things.

Firstly, I won't apologise until I'm calm enough to do so without feeling like I have to justify my side (I'm daft like that—if I feel I can't apologise without justifying my actions, then I don't feel like I'm really apologising, just making an excuse of an apology)—and that can take a while. And secondly, my husband wants to apologise quite soon after the worst is over, but will almost always justify his side. Which usually sparks things off again, although not on the same scale, simply because of this disparate view of apologies we have. I just want to give—and to get—a straight apology—no explanations. He thinks I will feel far better if he explains why he did what he did. And no amount of talking it over has changed things.

What has changed things is domestic discipline. Being spanked brings me out of any mood I may be in far, far quicker than anything else I know of. The pain and the sensations give me something far more immediate to concentrate on than petty stuff. And we only ever argue over petty stuff—the important things we can talk about. Once the spanking is over, I have let go of all that pettiness, feel calm and centred—if maybe utterly drained emotionally, and can wholeheartedly and genuinely apologise. I may apologise before he's finished, but with practice he's getting to know when I'm at the state I can apologise, and when I've let go of all of it—which may not be at the same time. And it also lets him work off his irritability and lose the need to justify anything he may have said or done. On the other hand, if he has

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done something that has reasonably upset me, then he apologises—no attempt at justifying it, or explaining it away, just a straight, genuine apology. Once things have calmed down, if he still feels I ought to know why he did/said what he did, then he'll tell me. But the relationship has given him the strength to realise he can just apologise without justifications and I will accept it.

So basically, we have both found a way to short-circuit relationship-damaging rows. We are both equally accountable for our actions—we just have different ways of it being dealt with. It is as much a big deal for him to admit he was wrong without trying to justify it as it is for me to swallow my pride and be spanked until I'm calm.¹⁸⁹

"HOW CAN I BE SURE THAT SHE WANTS TO BE TAKEN IN HAND?" (6 APRIL 2004)

My wife and I have been married for 22 years and have been together for almost 25. For most of that time we were equals. Recently, i.e. for the past three years or so, she has been turning submissive, or more accurately, she has been asking me to lead.

I have tried to talk to her about it and have had limited success. There comes a point in our discussions when she doesn't want to have to talk about it nor have to explain it any further. She does not want to have to give consent to having me lead. She simply wants me to do it.

In fact, she often rebels against my leadership. At first, when she rebelled, I took what she said seriously

and backed off. That frustrated her and left her feeling unloved. The problem is that she would not explain that to me.

When I pressed her for an explanation, she said that if she were to explain it to me that would put her in the position of being in charge and that isn't what she wants.

Over time and with lots of trial and error, I have discovered that when she goes off at me, what I need to do is to become dominant and not relent in my dominance no matter how hard she complains and now matter how much she says that something is my fault.

When I take over at these times and scold her, especially when I do so unrelentingly, she ends up crying and leaving the room for a few minutes. After maybe five or ten minutes, she returns, comes up to me, hugs me tightly in a not-wanting-to-let-go mood and says she is sorry.

Those moments are the most passionate and loving that we have ever experienced. It is exactly what she wants and I am happy to provide.

So, I do not need to know how to get her to want to be taken in hand. She wants it. My problem is, how do I decide when to insist on quashing her rebellion versus taking her seriously and listening to what she is saying in the moment? How do I decide when she really wants to be obedient and feel my strength versus when she wants to assert her own freedom?

In other words, if the wife does not want to talk about it, and only wants to do it, how does the husband lead and know where the limits are? Yes,

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I could try to talk to her about it but when I do, it ruins it for her. She does not want to have to admit to her need for submission.

I need to hear from you how to take a woman in hand when she wants it to feel "natural" rather than discussed and planned. I don't want to cross the line into abuse. How do I know when she has really withdrawn consent?

This includes a physical component. She says vehemently that she does not want to be spanked. However, she teases sometimes by overtly waving her behind at me in a submissive posture. When I mildly pat her she responds well and encourages me.

When I turn it into a real spanking, at first she warms to it. Then, when it gets to the point where it starts to hurt she says that it's enough and complains when I keep going.

How do I know if those complaints are real or if I should overrule her and keep going? If I take over and insist that she take her spanking, she might cry and rebel and eventually submit, as she does when I merely scold her.

But she might not. She might feel that I have abused her and it might hurt our relationship. It might be a betrayal of trust for her if I spank her against her will or it might be exactly what she really wants on some level. How do I tell if there is implicit consent?

All I know is that a mild spanking does not work. It leaves her feeling unsatisfied and crabby. I know for a fact that she wants at least a mild spanking because of her non-verbal communication. But short of taking

her over the line, I don't know how to figure out if she wants me to do it against her will and to the point of subduing her.

With scolding, there is no physical harm. If I go too far, I can heal the damage with a hug and a kiss. A good and effective scolding leaves her hurt and mad at me (temporarily, until she has cried alone for a few minutes).

If a spanking were to be effective along these lines, I wouldn't know it until after it was over. I would only know the outcome after a few minutes had passed and she either came and hugged me—or hated me for doing it.

Yes, we could use a safe-word and we have done so. The problem is that it leaves her with power that she does not want. It makes her decide when enough is enough. She does not want a safe-word, she wants me to know what to do. What is an honorable man to do?¹⁹⁰

"TAKEN IN HAND SAVED OUR MARRIAGE FROM DOOM" (9 APRIL 2004)

I'm ConfusedOfHomeCounties's husband and I just wanted to make a quick comment to follow on her wonderful article....*

I met C. a little over 11 years ago while I was at university aged 20. My father had just walked out on a 25-year marriage, as it had completely broken down. My parents never argued, at least not in front of my sister and me, and it always

* "Moving into a Taken In Hand relationship," 26 March 2004.

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seemed as if Dad treated Mum as an equal in most things.

When I first met C. I had more or less the same idea of how our relationship (and later marriage) should work: we should be equals in all things. Well, as she said in her article this didn't work very well, but we managed to keep things together for several years with what seemed like a very happy marriage interspersed with searing rows over the most petty of things. We have been married now since 1996, and we started seeing each other in 1992.

From my side of things, us being equals in the relationship never felt entirely comfortable, but I felt that I couldn't express this to her for fear of hurting her feelings or provoking a row. I always had this suppressed "old-fashioned" feeling that the husband should be the head of the household and that he should be responsible in all matters, including caring for his wife's needs. I was afraid that what happened to my parents would happen to us unless something was done to correct the situation; but I didn't know how to broach the idea that I felt that I *should* be in charge of the household without provoking a row!

When C. and I began playing with spanking and mild D/s in our erotic play, it opened my eyes to a new side of her that I didn't know existed, and her suggestion that I should spank her for discipline was like a light switch being thrown. I knew that I could explain my feelings to her without a row—the only problem was I had no idea how to begin!

Yes, the first time I took her in hand I was as nervous as hell. I'd

always been raised to believe that hitting a woman was *wrong*, so what the hell was I doing spanking the woman I love? To my shock and amazement, the spanking worked and what I thought was going to be a huge row was cut short, we both apologised, cuddled and felt better afterwards.

When C. sent me the email she mentioned in her article, I sat down and read through it, and I was finally able to open up to her and explain that I felt exactly as she did—that I should be "in charge" and that we would see how things progress. What progress there has been in our relationship since adopting this lifestyle has been remarkable. As C. puts it so well, we are simply both so much closer to each other than we were before.

I feel so much less stressed and irritable at home, because I know now that if we start to row over something petty I *can* assert my authority to stop the row (most often without C. needing a spanking at all!) and if I am in the wrong I know that I can apologise without feeling that I need to defend my view as I did in the past. I also feel so much happier about being able to be myself in the relationship without having to bury my "old-fashioned" side all the time and when I see C's adoring eyes looking at me I just feel so proud and comforted that such a wonderful woman trusts me enough to want to be submissive to me.

I truly feel that the Taken in Hand relationship that we have now has saved our marriage from eventual doom.¹⁹¹

"TO BE TAKEN" (16 APRIL 2004)

The recent discussion about rape caused me to consider what is really behind this desire of so many women. Many women fantasize about being raped. It is a common theme in many romance novels read by millions of women. It is well documented in academic journals where such subjects are investigated. It is always a scary undertaking when we explore the darker or primal side of our natures.

We can discuss the merits of the use of the word "rape" ad infinitum. But the question remains—why is this experience so important for so many women? I would like to move past the word and on to the experience the boss was trying to capture in her article.*

Being a man, it is difficult or even impossible for me to fully understand a woman's desire to be dominated by a man in a sexual act. After the boss's article† appeared I spoke with my wife asking her why was it that so many women entertain such fantasies. Her response was quite simple. She told me that many women, including her, desire a sexual experience in which they are physically and sexually dominated by a strong male.

She describes it as a mixture of feelings that are both scary and exhilarating at the same time. My wife emphasized that it is very important that it *not* be something she can con-

trol. All control must be stripped away. Those women who desire such an experience do not want to have to ask for it or orchestrate it; otherwise it loses its power to move them. This loss of control over their bodies is the key to the whole experience. It must be raw, animalistic, scary, forceful, unpredictable, hot and sweaty.

Although "rape" is such a loaded word, it does reveal something about the nature of the desired experience. For some woman there is something very powerful about being "forced" to submit to a stronger male. It is about being possessed and yes—taken. If you were to think about it, it may not seem reasonable. But it is not about reason or thinking, it is about being caught up in a powerful experience which fills all one's senses. It is primal. It may be that some women want only the masturbatory fantasy, but others want to move beyond the dreaming and sexual longing and experience the real thing.

In some important ways being sexually taken, for a woman, is no different from what happens when her man spansks her. He takes control of her by deciding when it is going to happen and by determining how and what is to happen during the disciplinary session. It happens despite her protests. It could be argued that a spanking is different in that it is not necessarily an erotic experience, especially at the moment of its delivery. But it is similar in that it is primal: it is about loss of control. I believe this is where its power lies. What ties these two experiences together for my wife—

* "When rape is a gift," 15 March 2004.

† "When rape is a gift," 15 March 2004.

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being sexually taken and being taken in hand—is that at some point she surrenders to it. And although at first she resists, in the end she surrenders to the will of the man who masters her.

Despite its controversial nature, the boss's article and the consequent discussion gets to something deeply profound about our sexuality as men and women. Although I am certainly not a theologian, I have always been fascinated by this part of Genesis 3:16: "and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." If we leave aside the theological interpretation (please allow me some literary licence) and see it as a purely mythological archetype, for me it simply demonstrates the powerful feeling a woman has for a man. It is this desire that lies beneath our thin veneer of civilized mores and behavior. Although I don't feel I have the words to adequately convey this mystery, I do know firsthand its power to move my wife. And in the final analysis, that is what matters to me.¹⁹²

"ARE YOU UNDER MISAPPREHENSIONS ABOUT TAKEN IN HAND?" (18 APRIL 2004)

The first time I looked at Taken In Hand, I really wasn't sure there was anything here for me—but something had hooked me, and the more I read, the more I realised my initial assumptions were mistaken.

So, to summarise what I've picked up from this site:

Most people here think that each relationship is different, that the

dynamics are different, and that what works for one may kill another.

Most people in Taken In Hand relationships would not dream of shoving their relationship style down another's throat as "the one true way".

Most people here have arrived at their current arrangements through discussion with their partner, and where the man is in charge, that is something both want and have agreed to because it works for them.

Because one person is responsible for making the final decision, there is a lot more discussion before a decision is made, and the other person's views are respected a lot more.

Following on from the above, there is a lot more openness.

Both the husband and the wife will try their hardest not to do anything that will hurt the other. Maybe this should be top of this list, because it strikes me as one of the most important aspects. The allocation of power in a Taken In Hand-style relationship means that a lot more care has to be taken by both partners to ensure it doesn't become abusive. Communication is the key to any relationship, of course, but in a Taken In Hand-style relationship, the commitment made to actually listen to and understand your partner is far, far greater because the risks are that much worse. Yes, it is entirely possible to be completely open and honest in a relationship without the framework of Taken In Hand/DD, but some people find that framework helps.

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A lot of people in this sort of relationship are highly sexual creatures who are not afraid to initiate sex.

Above all, a Taken In Hand-style relationship is about honesty and openness on both sides.

And finally, most of the women here seem to be strong women in the outside world, involved in jobs in all sectors, including male roles.¹⁹³

"THE HAZARDS OF SELF-SACRIFICE AND IMPOSSIBLE STANDARDS" (20 APRIL 2004)

When I got married, I settled for a relationship that was almost meaningless. I think we loved each other, but there was a certain quality that was missing. I married her because we got along well and I gave up on finding the one that had the sparks to make the relationship fly.

After a while, the relationship deteriorated into a depressing existence that was occasionally perforated by irrationally violent arguments. Later, she applied for divorce, which was another very nasty episode. I blamed her. I blamed her for the whole mess. She was responsible for the lousy marriage, she started the arguments, and she went out of her way to make my life miserable.

This is how I chose to view this entire disastrous chapter in my life for a long time after it ended. Looking back, I finally understand what was missing. She was a feminist, so what we had was an "equal" marriage, but it was more equal for her than for me, and I allowed it to be that way.

Before we got married, I had some idea of what I wanted, but I never expressed it for fear of losing her. Because of that fear, I have a gaping hole in my life that should have been filled with happiness and contentment. So, here is the real blame for the whole mess; I was too willing to bend, at the expense of my desires and needs. As a result of that, I became increasingly unhappy and crawled deeper into my cave.

Nowadays I have gone to the other extreme: I have become unbending and very demanding in the relationships that pass by me. My standards are far too high, and it's quite possible that no mere mortal can meet them. This needs to be tempered, but by how much? I wonder now how many relationships that I have trashed from a snap judgement of a minor human frailty that would have actually been good for me.

I am not looking for perfection in spite of my actions which say otherwise. I have gone from very low expectations to those that are excessively high. I need to bring these expectations down to a humanly accessible level. I struggle now with how low to bring them and still maintain a decent standard from which I can derive an acceptable relationship.¹⁹⁴

"ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS" (21 APRIL 2004)

I want to tell you a cautionary tale about a friend of mine, in the hope that you will not suffer the same distress he did. This friend of mine, whom I'll call "Joe", met a woman

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online in a chatroom for people in his town in England. They chatted and emailed madly for ages, Joe falling passionately in love with her. She had sent him her picture (well, a picture—who can say if it was of her? It is easy to grab a picture of someone else off the net...). After Joe had well and truly fallen for her, and was in a terrible state because she kept either refusing to meet him or cancelling dates, he discovered that far from being a 35-year-old accountant in England, this person (we still don't know if it was a woman....) was writing from a university server in the USA. It was probably a student.

I mention this story because there were some big red flags he should have seen, and which you should not miss yourself if you are in a similar situation:

First, despite writing vast amounts of email to Joe and chatting a lot, and appearing from what she said to be extremely keen on Joe, this person did not meet Joe, not even in a public place for coffee. If a person is really interested, and he or she has nothing to hide, they *are* going to want to meet up. There is nothing worse than getting really close to someone online, only to discover that there is zero attraction chemistry when you meet in person. This woman claimed that she had had bad experiences/been abused or something, and that that was why she was reluctant to meet even after a long time, but given the feeling expressed in her email messages and chats, this reluctance simply did not add up.

On several occasions, she agreed to meet, and then did not turn up. Later, she always had a perfect excuse—car accident, grandmother dying, you name it, it sounded plausible. But after about the third such time, I smelt a rat... One thing that everyone in any kind of relationship needs to keep clear in their mind is that *actions speak louder than words* and if a person's actions belie their words, it is the actions you should believe, not the words.

Another friend of mine fell apart over a woman who was extremely friendly to him whenever they met, looking deeply into his eyes and appearing to find him so very interesting.... and yet somehow, she never quite got around to seeing him alone, on a date. There was always some excuse. Her words said she was very interested indeed; her actions said she wasn't. He should have listened to her actions. Instead, she led him a merry dance that went nowhere and cost him a fortune in expensive gifts to her, not to mention a broken heart...

And before you conclude that this chap must be a sad loser and a gullible fool, let me tell you that in fact he is a highly intelligent, insightful, switched-on, sharp-witted, rational, mature, even cynical man who has women throwing themselves at him constantly and who had never before been the one being strung along. It can happen to the best of us.

But to get back to Joe, eventually, I got so sick of his angst-ridden phone calls to me about this woman whose actions did not seem to me consistent with her words, that I per-

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suaded Joe to run the most basic check on her, just to rule out my hunch that she was not who she said she was. (For detailed easy-to-follow technical instructions on how to run the check I ran on the information in her email message headers, click here.)*

Joe was at first very angry with me for suggesting that she wasn't genuine. After all, he had her home address, and he had driven past her house and seen her BMW outside, and she really seemed to know about accountancy so she must be an accountant, right? And surely she must be in England, because her email address was a yahoo.co.uk one, right? Wrong! You can get a yahoo.co.uk address whether or not you are in the UK. You can get a yahoo.com address whether or not you are in the USA. And if you have visited a place, you might know that there is often a BMW parked outside the house.

We all know that actions speak louder than words, but even the most rational individuals can sometimes get swept up in excitement and forget everything they know. And that is why I make no apology for stating the obvious: because sometimes we all need a reminder.¹⁹⁵

"CHEMISTRY IS INDISPENSABLE" (21 APRIL 2004)

"Sparks" are indispensable.

* "Is he who (or where) he says he is?"
20 October 2003.

How many of us have tried to make a potential relationship into something it really isn't?

Has anyone ever succeeded?

"Sparks" and chemistry are a result of the right two people mixing together and creating something that is more than the sum of its parts.

It is mysterious. It can't be manufactured. It can't be demanded. It is like a force of nature.

To settle for less only ensures you will never reach your full potential within a relationship.

To me, chemistry comes before any sort of relationship structure—even a Taken In Hand relationship.

The structure only enhances what should already be there.¹⁹⁶

"THE ALPHA MALE AND MASCULINE POWER" (23 APRIL 2004)

Being a calm, rational, imperturbable sort of person, it is not often that the mere presence of another person has the power to do any more than make me recoil from the olfactory shock caused by their halitosis or their overpowering after-shave. But very occasionally (about once a decade) I have found myself intensely affected by the mere presence of a particular man—so intensely affected that it has taken every ounce of self-control to appear unmoved.

The effect is extreme, both physically and psychologically. Primal. Overwhelming. It feels as though the man has godlike power—the power of a *man*; masculine power. You feel totally held by this power. The desire to be taken by the man is

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so intense that it is frightening. It can be difficult to breathe, or difficult to remain standing, let alone maintain a conversation. Bone dry mouth, zero appetite, heart all over the place, the fear that you might faint, shaking like a leaf, body positively screaming to be taken, a reckless willingness and primal desire to do whatever that man wants. The *masculine power* of the man—you feel that power with every fibre of your being. Melting in a white-hot inferno of desire, out of your senses, so far out of control psychologically that you can't even imagine being in control, totally in his power. You feel *owned* by the man, totally his, totally submissive.

If at the time, you're at an academic conference unrelated to your own field, and you are trying to have a highly technical discussion about an arcane piece of research, say, being thus affected by a complete stranger can be a little disturbing. Just as well it only happens once a decade. And just as well I have iron self-control.

I've been thinking about this a lot lately. What exactly is it that causes this extreme response? Do other women experience this too? (Yes!) Is it something that can develop in a particular man, or is it something that is either there or not there? What do these men have that others don't? Are they the legendary human alpha males? Why do some men have it and not others? Is there actually something objectively different about them, and if so, what? Or is it a subjective thing, such that a man whose presence would cause this response in me would leave

another woman cold, and vice versa?

I once asked a man if he was aware of having masculine power (he was a very long way away at the time!) and from his answer, it seems that other women had felt it too, but he seemed to have no idea why, and assumed that all men naturally have this indefinable, mysterious quality that might be termed "masculine power". But they don't. Or perhaps I am just blind to its existence in the vast majority of men.

Am I confusing psychological power with masculinity? I myself have psychological power and strength, so I do not think of power as being a masculine quality. And yet, this thing I am talking about feels to me overwhelmingly *masculine*, of a *man*, alpha male. What is it?

Possibly the following might be part of it, but I feel very dissatisfied with my analysis of it so far, so I am hoping for some discussion on this subject, some criticism, and some enlightenment.

The power to command, the quiet confidence to know for sure that he will prevail, and the daring to go for it and take what he wants. A commanding presence even if he doesn't know it. Faint heart never won fair lady. Fearlessness—or daring or courage even in the face of fear. He who dares, wins. Calm assurance. The absence of any hint of asking for a favour or appealing to pity. Directness. Activeness. Effectiveness. Not hiding behind a flirty exterior never daring to risk being direct.

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It seems easier to say what it isn't than what it is. It is not directly related to appearance, or not obviously so to me, anyway. And whilst quiet confidence might be part of it, there are plenty of men who are positively brimming with confidence who do not move me at all. I alluded to the alpha male idea because it seems as though dominance is a part of it, but it seems to me to be the sort of unaffected, unselfconscious dominance one might call "natural dominance" rather than the theatrical, affected, dominance I see in many a BDSM "Dom". It does not seem as though the man needs to be aware of the effect he has, and indeed, men who appear to think that they are God's gift to women tend to confirm me in my atheism. :-)

On the other hand, men who have a victim mentality, or who appeal to pity, or who plead or beg for favours, or who grovel, or who are delicate, sensitive, mystical souls like Ayn Rand's "eminent young poet [who] was pale and slender... had a soft, sensitive mouth, and eyes hurt by the whole universe", or who seem helpless, or who are endlessly sorry for themselves, or who have a bad temper that they can't control, or who otherwise appear weak, don't have it.

I assume that it is a quality that can develop, rather than being something fixed or something you are born with. Life's experiences and the will to make changes in yourself and your life surely can effect significant changes. I know that I myself have actively developed my own confidence and strength over the years, forcing myself to "feel the fear

and [dare to] do [the scary things I passionately wanted to do] anyway". And that this has significantly affected the way others see me—though as someone once pointed out to me, that in itself implies a strength of will that not everyone has.

I'd love to discuss this. Perhaps you have some fascinating insights to share—in which case, please do!¹⁹⁷

"CONSENSUAL RAPE AS A GIFT OF CONTROL" (26 APRIL 2004)

Both Stephen's article* and the boss's article† have really stirred up some interesting topics that really have nothing to do with the original point at all. And I have sincerely enjoyed reading them all. What seems a bit interesting is that so many posters aren't really addressing the true subject of the original topic... that of being given the gift of another form of control and dominance and submission in a relationship.

There are so many forms of control... mind control, emotional control, and physical control, just to name a few. In most cases, the woman must exercise some control herself and choose to submit. Unless she is tied down, or up as the case may be, even submitting to a spanking is a choice she has to make even if she doesn't want the spanking. She still has a choice at that moment to submit to it or not.

* "To be taken," 16 April 2004.

† "When rape is a gift," 15 March 2004.

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When a woman is physically taken against her will (and I am talking about in a consensual non-consensual way and am in *no way* talking about in a stranger off the street or in a fit of anger in a relationship way) something happens deep within her (in some women, anyway) that is very hard to explain. There is just something very humbling and eye opening when the man can control her and her body even when she is physically resisting.

When I am lost in the struggle and fighting tooth and nail to *not be taken*, and my body begins to respond and my eyes grow wide and my face burns with humiliation and I fight harder and struggle to not let happen what I know is about to happen and he sees it and feels it and becomes even stronger in his insistence to have *all* of me... When my body explodes in release and I am still fighting and the knowledge and acceptance sweeps over me that in reality, even if I wanted to be free, my body will always belong to him, at any given time and in any given situation that he so chose... It's very hard to describe what happens inside me then. That kind of control is very different from other kinds of control and for some, it is important that they feel it along with the rest too.

I don't believe it's about sexual repression or suppression or feeling "dirty" or traditional roles or anything else. It is about being controlled and it does bring on a very deep and primal response that is very animalistic and eye opening to

just who is who in the relationship. Or who is what in the relationship.

Some women only want/need a small amount of control; others crave deeper control. And that is not implying they want or need to be micromanaged. They want to be controlled where the control is quite literally taken to a physical level. That is just one way it can be done for some.

As far as it being a gift...God yes, it's a gift from the man to give us that form of his power and domination. Because as was stated in an earlier post,* just the fact that one knows they can and choose not to is very powerful indeed. But to actually be allowed to feel it and live it is, after all, a gift from the one who has the power.

What works for each of us individually and as a couple may not work for all of us. But...none are better or lesser than the other. We just are.¹⁹⁸

"SUBMISSION AND SECURITY" (1 MAY 2004)

I have to say that of late, I have not been all that submissive. It's not because I am not submissive, or I don't want to be, or any other reason but one: I have not been asked to be submissive.

I suppose during our relationship, the evolution, and the ongoing, my submission was a very big part of who we are, where we go and most

* See:

<<https://web.archive.org/web/20130128053022/http://www.takeninhand.com/to.be.taken#comment-1030>>

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importantly...how we connect. Oh, life goes on, and I suppose that is part of the why this is happening. Pressures from work, pressures from health and just being spread very thin and not working quite so hard on the home front.

How does that leave me feeling? I questioned that when I found myself rather floundering. What am I looking for, searching, wanting and certainly yearning for?

I did not come into this relationship submissive. I was a spirited and independent person who was more than able to solve the problems of my world. Not that I ever lost that. I suppose I added my submission. But it was that very addition that gave so much substance to who I am. To who we are. So what am I really missing?

When I looked, really looked—I miss the security of his control. There hasn't been much “stand over there, put your eyes down, wear this today.” The affection has not waned, nor the constant watchfulness, and we remain as devoted as always. I do not feel neglected or anything but cherished.

But I am missing the connection. The one that seems to come so naturally when I submit. With some embarrassment, with some feeble resistance and with a knowledge on both our parts that I will. I miss it.

I have to say it was not entirely easy to convince Gary this was not part of the menu and that I was not satisfied. But Gary always validates me and was finally able to see what I was saying, and more so, what I was feeling. And once he dug a bit deep-

er, he saw too what he was missing—and desiring.

But even more startling, was his realization that he had *not* been flexing his dominance and that there is no room for that type of absence in our dynamics.

Gary's take on that was that *no*, it should never happen. It was his lack of noticing, his lack of picking up on my obvious hints, his lack of seeing that something more serious was coming. He feels things like this bump have absolutely no place within our relationship.

We have solved our problem and now are back to being sweetly Gary and Blush. And he knows that submission does not come with a hard here-and-now. It is to be eased into. And he is easing into it. And I am happily listening—and it's been a while.

Happily I can say that last night Gary was as focused and intimate as only he can be. He explained (as he did so long ago) that while I am loved, and pampered and spoiled, I am also to bow my head to him, am punished by him and accept his correction.

Never once in the past would I have thought this type of love relationship would become so very important to me. I guess I have just found myself supporting what I did not know before. And I do indeed need Gary to take me in hand.¹⁹⁹

“AUTHORITY IN A TAKEN IN HAND RELATIONSHIP” (5 MAY 2004)

Authority is the right or power to enforce rules or give orders. As a

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man with an interest in having a Taken In Hand relationship, I like the idea of having the power to exercise authority over a woman who would enjoy that. I have no interest in being in an authority position over a woman for whom that would not be exciting and enjoyable: it would have to be consensual. I am not someone who thinks men have the moral right to be in authority over their women: this is only for those who find the idea of authority fun, exciting and erotic.

I like the idea of being with a woman who would accept my authority—a woman who would want me to have the right to make decisions and command obedience. I like the idea that if I were to tell my woman to do something, she would do it. If she were to disobey me, I would punish her. The woman for me would be someone who would find that exciting, a woman who is aroused by authority, and by my exercising that authority over her.

I'd like to have authority partly because of its power to short-circuit relationship-damaging rows, as ConfusedofHomeCounties* and the boss† have explained. But mainly (let's be honest!) because it's sexy.

Even if I were mistaken (or if the woman thought I was mistaken), I'd still expect her to accept my authority and obey me. I am not into having a servant, and would not use my authority to extract service from my woman, but even here, if I were to

ask her to do something, I would expect her to do it, and would punish her if she did not. I would of course want my woman to feel free to speak her mind, raise objections, and I would hear her ideas, opinions and complaints. But in the end, I would be the authority and I would make the decisions and she would be subject to that authority and willingly so.

Having said all this, I am a very laid-back, easy-going, non-demanding person, and I believe in exercising my authority with a very light touch. I think this important for a Taken In Hand relationship.

Although I said I'd expect obedience, I'd be disappointed if my woman had no spirit and playful mischievousness sometimes. I wouldn't expect punishment to be very frequent, and I would expect it always to bring us together and to reaffirm our connection, never to make my woman miserable or distress her for any length of time. If authority were not something positive for both, it would not have the power to excite me. Consent is paramount: I don't want to take away women's rights.²⁰⁰

"THE SEXUALITY OF 'NON-SEXUAL' DOMINANCE" (7 MAY 2004)

When people ask whether you want to be "dominated" what is your answer? I never quite know whether the answer is yes or no. It depends! Is the questioner referring to what is commonly known as sexual dominance, or some other sort?

* "Why Taken In Hand isn't actually unfair," 5 April 2004.

† "Why you should not withhold a spanking!" 29 November 2003.

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Many Taken In Hand readers are positively turned off by the idea of being dominated sexually—but sexually turned on by being dominated in other ways.

If you enjoy being dominated sexually, you might like being tied up and left to wait, or you might like being told what to do in the sexual arena. If you have service-orientated submissive tendencies, you are probably thrilled by the idea of being required to serve your man sexually. You might like being given moment-by-moment instructions, possibly in a sharp voice or a commanding tone. If you have masochistic tendencies too, you might like being made to wear nipple clamps or subjected to other painful procedures. There is also humiliation and no doubt other things that might come under the heading of sexual dominance.

If sexual dominance leaves you cold, you are likely to be indifferent to these things, or more likely positively turned off by them. You might well very much want to please your man sexually but thoroughly dislike being told what to do sexually on a moment-by-moment basis.

Many women make the mistake of thinking that because sexual dominance and service-orientated submission leave them cold, they have no desire to be dominated at all. Or that they are mixed-up. Or that when their heart races at the thought of being with a man who wears the trousers, there is nothing sexual about it.

Actually, it is sexual. What is going on here in many cases is that such women are aroused sexually by au-

thority, control, the man being more generally in charge. They respond sexually to non-sexual dominance but not to sexual dominance. They get a sexual kick out of being with a man who is naturally and unselfconsciously dominant, and who takes charge in respectful, easy-going, understated ways. They just don't happen to enjoy service-orientated submission or being told what to do sexually.

Understanding exactly what it is you and your loved one like is half the battle. The more you understand about each other, the more likely you are to be able to jointly create new ways of interacting that thrill both of you and lead to further exciting discoveries. And remember: what you like or dislike today may not be what you like or dislike tomorrow.

Whatever you like, whoever you are, I wish you joy in your relationships.²⁰¹

"TAKEN IN HAND BY AN ARDENT FEMINIST" (11 MAY 2004)

What a delight to find this site where articulate members have expressed positive feelings about feminism without being reviled or ridiculed. This is a breath of fresh air in the often predictable world of DD (domestic discipline) and its "oh for the good old days" sentiments.

For almost 17 years I have been married to one of the most ardent feminists I have ever known—my husband. His genuine and empathetic love of women has meant he

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has never been short on female friends. I am just glad that he is straight! Most men who understand women as well as he does are gay. He's also an excellent cook and loves shopping. You can see why he may seem sort of borderline to strangers. On the other hand he can handle a rifle, loves rock climbing, and golfs and fishes when he gets the chance. He's male through and through.

I could never submit to an insecure man who felt some arbitrary patriarchal role made his opinions more valid than mine or his decisions inherently superior. MB would no more use his position (and all that that entails—paddle, hairbrush—whatever) to try to silence my opinions about human rights (especially the F-word) than he would use it to try to change my favourite colour. Winning through beating? Where's the victory in that?

Ironically, MB is the one who reads or points out articles that inflame his sense of injustice—frequently as they pertain to women. He notices inequities that escape me. I love, respect, and trust him simply because I know he has a deep sense of fair play and right and wrong.

Is he always fair when I am taken in hand? Hardly. He is human. But I have promised to submit and submit I do. I take comfort in knowing that he'll never be malevolent with his discipline. He takes me out of my comfort zone but never to the point where I am in real danger, physically or emotionally.

As someone said to me years ago, "any woman who believes she has the right to vote, hold a driver's licence or keep her own bank account

is a feminist." Without feminism I would never have had the right to make the choices that led me to find my soulmate. I would never have had the independence financially or physically to leave the country of my birth and immigrate to his.

Reconciling feminism with a submissive intimate life is easy. I am an adult, fully able to make independent decisions without worrying that the murmuring crowd may not approve of me. We choose to live a Taken In Hand lifestyle because the power structure works for us. Do we care what others might think about that? Not by half.

MB would have no joy in leading a weak woman. Anyone can walk on a doormat. I would not follow a man who thought his biological difference entitled him to a God-given right to lead.

In a way then, feminism brought us together. Decisions made from a position of strength are far more enduring than those made through coercion or financial or other material inequities. We are partners. But he has the deciding vote. It's not a difficult formula.²⁰²

**"THE WORM TURNS (A LITTLE LATE, BUT
BETTER LATE THAN NEVER!)" (22 JUNE
2004)**

I'm been lurking on this site for many weeks now, reading the material with fascination. It's shown me that an Internet site doesn't have to be pornographic to be sexually arousing. But more importantly than stirring my loins, it has stirred my hopes for my marriage.

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By the end of the year I'll have turned 60. My wife is three years younger than me. We've been married nearly 22 years, and for the last few years the marriage has been virtually sexless.

I can't bear to write a long essay about all the details of our relationship and all the possible causes of the problem: in a nutshell, I believe the main reason is her anger at me for failing to be the financial provider in our home. She's a teacher and earns a respectable salary: I'm a freelance writer and editor, and earn intermittently. Furthermore, when I do earn, it's very little: and on the occasions when I've taken well-paid steady positions, I've managed to lose the jobs after a year or two, entirely through my own failings. My wife is brought low by our periodic money crises, and by our chronic inability to plan ambitiously because we never have much money.

In day-to-day life we relate to each other in terms of prickly equality. The only areas in which I'm the boss are the routine male chores of putting out the rubbish, filling the car, and managing the computer. In addition, since I mostly work from home, I'm landed with many of the routine household chores, and cooking the evening meal. She takes responsibility for the interesting meals when we're entertaining, for interior decor, for the garden—and she does the DIY.

If I were to propose taking the role of the head of the household, I would choke on the words, and she would laugh bitterly. Yet I have cause to think that, deep down, that's what she's looking for. There

are times when she acts like a child who needs looking after (and I do look after her). And there have been other times when she's bitterly resented my acting like an equal instead of like an assertive man.

I have to find my way out of this. I believe one important direction is to start to earn according to my potential. I'm guilty of having lived off her money, and doing chores around the house isn't sufficient recompense for what I've cheated her of.

Another direction in which I have to grow is being firm with her in those matters where she's irrational and incapable of unsticking herself—areas such as her weight, her fear of professional advancement, her bouts of depression. I know I've provided her with plenty of support in the past; if I can move from being a friend and counsellor to being a firm manager in these areas, perhaps I can take her in hand elsewhere too. I'm determined to have a flourishing sex life, and I'd really like it to be with her. You can imagine how I'm tormented by this site's delectable visions of sex in general, and spanking in particular, enthusiastically given and received.

All my life I've prided myself on being a nice guy, and now I have to face up to the fact that I've been an irresponsible wimp. Do you think it's possible for me to turn my life around at 60?

Best wishes to all of you on this site, and especially to the wonderful women who contribute.²⁰³

"TIMESHARE TAMING" (25 JUNE 2004)

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When I first found this website I thought "Crikey, I'm in bleeding *Stepford Wifeland*," but I realised as I read further that there was more to it than that. I read articles like "Taken In Hand by an ardent feminist" with confused feelings of envy, distaste, attraction, revulsion, bewilderment and (might as well admit it) arousal.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to just totally relinquish control to my husband and be *completely* submissive. Then I think about the furious row we had earlier today and the horrible things I screamed at him, and I say to myself "Come off it! You'd never manage it. A submissive wife simply does *not* tell her husband that she wishes she could turn him into a rat and set the cat on him." Maddy's observation* about any woman being a feminist if she believes she should be able to vote, hold a driver's license and have her own bank account is good (though my husband actually thinks women shouldn't be allowed to drive—he says they can't turn the steering wheel all the way round so they never go round corners properly, they dither too much, and they haven't got the brain power).

I used to have very confused feelings about sexual equality, etc. I used to wonder how I could believe in the equality of the sexes and yet yearn so strongly to be dominated. How could I really be a feminist when my idea of bliss is having a man put me across his knee and wallop the living daylight out

of me? It's crazy. But as I'm getting pretty old now I don't let things like that worry me too much. I'll probably be entering the menopause zone in a few years' time, when, as my husband remarks, "You'll be even more bloody cantankerous than you are now."

Oh, how nice it would be to feel serene and submissive and happy *all* the time. But with me the submissiveness never seems to last; it wears off, and then I'm my usual self again. I am a shrew who *can* be tamed, but only on a temporary basis. A sort of Timeshare Taming.²⁰⁴

"WHO SAYS YOU HAVE TO BE SUBMISSIVE?" (15 JULY 2004)

If a woman reacts strongly against being described as submissive, and delights in having a commanding presence but likes it when a man takes charge with her, is she "dominant [but] in denial", as Bill P. suggested, submissive but in denial, or just plain confused? If she enjoys expressing all the different aspects of her personality and feels exuberant and free when with a man who appreciates all of her instead of wanting her to express only one bit of herself, is she marvellously multidimensional or in need of psychiatric help?

Those women with an aversion to being (metaphorically as opposed to literally) pinned down think about these things the way others think about football or world hun-

ger.

* "Taken In Hand by an ardent feminist," 11 May 2004.

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In a comment on Taken In Hand, Scarlett wrote:

In D/s, there's almost a parallel "gender" created, the dominant and submissive

When I read that, I was struck by the thought that the way I'd prefer to interact in a relationship would be more DD than D/s. Not "DD" as in "domestic discipline"—I do not fantasise about being spanked or subjected to infantilising disciplinary action—but "dominant-dominant".

Preferring naturally dominant men, I have sometimes attempted to think of myself as being submissive—but that label just doesn't fit. Not at all. Not even remotely. For some women, submission can feel liberating and exciting and they feel anything but diminished by it. That is marvellous! But when I read the wonderful writings of such women, no matter how beautiful the style and no matter what the content is, I just can't relate to it. And nor could I remain happy and vibrant with a man who wanted me to give him submission. Apparently I am not alone in this. This inability to identify with the "submissive" label appears to be characteristic of the taken in hand woman.

Several women have said that when a man likes only their soft, feminine side, or wants them always to dress that way, or tells them never to cut their long hair, or expects mindless obedience and a submissive attitude at all times, they find it off-putting. Not only do those things feel like a push towards the stale boredom of stereotypical woman-

hood and a static, lifeless relationship, they feel like a push to eviscerate a valuable part of the woman's personality: the dominant, effective, assertive, even *masculine* side.

Dominant and strong I may be, but the last thing I want is to dominate a man. Whilst I have the greatest respect for non-dominant, submissive men, I am not drawn to them as men. I want a man even more dominant than I. A man who exerts control as a natural part of his personality. And whilst I am not at all the fighting sort, in the event that there are any conflicts, I want the man to win. I want the man to be in control—but not by requiring of me that I shut down half my personality and become unnaturally submissive, and not by requiring that I diminish myself in any way.

This is not about being in denial, it is about recognising the reality and examining the implications. If you have a dominant, strong, masculine personality, and you can't relate to the little girl idea, attempting to see yourself as a submissive little girl is asking for trouble. To have a good relationship, you have to relate to one another as the individuals you are, not as the individuals you think you ought to be. A relationship requiring that you enact fixed stereotypical roles is bound to be handicapped and a handicap to your own individual growth.

So if you think you may be falling into the mistake of damping down your dominant, masculine side, challenge your assumption that that is necessary or in any way desirable. It simply isn't true that if you want a

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dominant man, you have to be submissive. You can both be dominant!

You may think that with two dominant personalities what you'd have is one almighty power struggle but that is not necessarily so. It depends. Do the dominant characteristics of each person arise out of weakness or out of strength? If the former, there is bound to be a power struggle; if the latter, any struggles there may be are likely to be fun rather than destructive. If both individuals need to "win" to increase their self-esteem or protect their fragile ego, there may well be problems. But if they each appreciate and even encourage the dominant, masculine side of the other and they broadly feel in accord with one another about how to run their relationship (for example, at least one of them does not want to "win"), and they share a sense of fun in their interactions, they may well have a blast together.

Recognising that expressing your dominant, masculine side need not be a threat, and need not lead to fights, but may lead to a deeper, more exciting, more fulfilling relationship is liberating. It frees you from the psychological tyranny of self-imposed pseudo-submission. It frees you to be fully yourself. It frees you to interact as the person you are. And contrary to what you might think if you are in certain sections of BDSM sub-culture, many naturally dominant men prefer naturally strong, dominant women, because if a woman is obviously strong, the man can relax and not worry that his strength will overwhelm her, just as is the case in reverse.

These liberating insights can free women from the thought that they are lacking in femininity or that they need to act or become more submissive. Once you feel free to embrace and express the dominant/masculine aspects of yourself, you are no longer fighting a battle for control of your personality. And when you stop waging that war on yourself, you are bound to lose the defensiveness that is inevitably associated with that sort of inner conflict. This can bring a deep and abiding sense of peace. Paradoxically, this peacefulness can give the woman a softness that seems exquisitely feminine.

Who *says* that if you want a dominant man, you have to suppress your dominant side and be submissive?!²⁰⁵

"THERE IS NO KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOUR" (9 AUGUST 2004)

Before I married R, I told him I was afraid I'd walk all over him. His reply was, "if you think you can!"

The ensuing years were submissive ones for me. I let him be the man, make the decisions, start new businesses, while I home-schooled and housekept and was the social instigator for our life. I used to command all the finances, but felt I was becoming a shrew when I wouldn't let him spend our money. I turned them over to him. All was well. By the recession of '91, it was obvious that one income could not sustain our little family. I went to work.

I am a workaholic, competitive, and responsible to a fault. He is un-

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able to work for someone other than himself. I scrimped and scrimped, cut my own hair and never bought a thing for myself. He bought every toy and gadget that he fancied. After 23 years, I realized that I was very angry at him. He never thought of me, but assumed I was still sitting behind him on the "bitch seat" (biker's term) happy to be along for the ride. Was he ever surprised and threatened when I woke up to my own dreams, too long on hold while waiting for him to find himself and get happy. But, he's a good man, and he got it.

Girls, Guys, there are no shining knights who come along and make everything right. There's just yourself, and what you do with that. It's been a bumpy adjustment, but I took my life carefully into my own hands, freed myself from expecting anything from my husband, and made a life for myself. We're still adjusting, but he's happy because I'm no longer angry with him. And I like him a lot more since I'm spending my money on what I want to see developed, the work I want to do (not a bloody office job forever!) and I've been encouraging him to do what he loves and not worry about me. We're adults, after all.

It's a kind of separation that has made us both stronger. He realizes now how much I've contributed to his comfort and goals. He appreciates that I want to spend my hard-earned money on my own business investment. It's hard to see him financially uncomfortable, since I had previously dedicated my life and income to making him happy. No more. I'm making *me* happy, and it's

helping us both. He's being pushed out of his nest a bit, but it's making him remember what it was like to be competitive, alive, moving forward. Personal growth is messy and uncomfortable, (just look at a teenager!) but growth is a sign of health. Will our marriage survive? I'm not sure yet. But a better relationship has arisen from all the chaotic changes.

Get healthy, get happy, be yourself by yourself. If it's just about sexual gratification, spanking can be a part or not. If it's about mutual respect and personal growth, then the sex will be hot, whether you spank or not.²⁰⁶

"HOW TAKEN IN HAND EXORCISED MY INNER DEMON" (11 AUGUST 2004)

Last night my husband took me in hand physically for the very first time. Oh, he's spanked me before but not with the satisfaction and immediate results that were apparent last night.

I have this inner voice; my husband calls it my demon. You know, that insidious voice that tells me I'm fat, ugly, irresponsible, and lazy. It's something that I've always struggled with but lately it hasn't been as loud.

For a long time I was severely depressed, my self-esteem was almost nil, and I was anxious about everything from meeting new people to the horrible looming future. However, recently, within the last year to be exact, my persona has totally changed. I am now a confident, warm, upbeat, very spirited young

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woman. It's taken a lot of therapy, support from my husband, and a little anti-depressant to get there but the change has been tremendous.

However, yesterday I got a visit from my old self. I was going to take my two kids to the pool but I couldn't find my pool pass so a voice in my head crept in whispering "irresponsible." Then I got busy and was unable to take a shower so another voice joined the first saying, "Ugly, dirty, gross." Then I tried on some old summer clothes to take to the beach and they didn't fit so yet another voice chimed, "fat, fat, fat."

To top it off I couldn't find my anti-depressant prescription so that voice whispering "irresponsible" started screaming in my head. By the time my Husband, CD, got home I was a mess.

Once I got my older daughter to bed I went downstairs to CD's office to talk to him and see if he could help me through this. He was kind and loving while I whined and simpered, beating myself up. Then his demeanor changed and he became the dominant husband we've recently uncovered since discovering the Taken in Hand site two weeks ago. He got very firm with me and said, "Just stop it. That's enough of the pity party. Tell the old C, that old demon, that it's time for her to go."

I whined that he was being mean to me and I needed his sympathy and support not his annoyance. At that point he looked at me calmly but firmly and said, "This is B.S. We're not getting anywhere, bend over."

I argued with him a little but in the end went over his knee and he really

let me have it. Soon I was crying, but you know what? All of the sudden, while he was spanking me, my spirit changed. I felt the weakness, the spiritual and emotional pain drain out of me. My heart and soul felt stronger and I started laughing. CD asked me if the old C was gone and I was able to answer confidently, "Yes!"

My tail was warm and throbbing but my soul was renewed while the soul zapping demon was shown the door. Now we know that when I fall into old bad habits, all that my husband has to do is take me in hand to get me back on track!²⁰⁷

"THREE DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES OF RAPE" (13 AUGUST 2004)

At the age of fifteen (I was still a virgin), I was brutally raped by the guy (18) I had been dating steady for almost two years. It was violent and incredibly painful and totally unexpected. His demeanor towards me was total anger. I remember afterwards, when he had fallen asleep, getting up to leave and his brother meeting me in the hall. He had heard everything from the next room, and took it upon himself to take care of me, and take me home.

Maybe this is the underlying aspect of my own rape fantasies—the fact that I lost my own virginity to rape.

Being a stupid, naïve teenager, I continued to date X, at least a four more times. I guess I thought this was an isolated incident. Each date ended with him forcing himself on me in extreme anger. I finally decid-

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ed to end the relationship after the last incident where he gagged and tied me to the wooden arms of a couch at a friend's house, and raped me numerous times in front of his friends. This last assault finally ended when he passed out and a friend untied me. I promptly left, never to see him again.

The human mind is a funny thing. I didn't even remember this happening until 20 years later, and I had been happily married to my current husband (maybe this presented me a safe zone for the memory to come back). All I can remember remembering as a teenager, was that we had sex—but the memories were blurry. When the full memories came back, they hit me like a brick. It took about a month for me to sort through everything, and put them into the past.

About four years after the first incident, I was kidnapped at knife-point and raped by a stranger. The strongest memory I have of this is that I became detached from my body and watched like a spectator until it was over. This time I was scared for my life because the attacker had a weapon.

Yes, I responded to both incidents by getting wet, but because the first was with someone I knew and thought I loved, I remember the feel of him in me. The second, I can't even remember the feel of his hands touching me—just the knife.

Yes, now I have fantasies of rape, but like it has been stated, it is with the *who* that I want the choice. I don't crave the feelings of extreme terror and fearing for my life, just

the fear accompanied by not being in control.

It has been over three years, and only the one time (so-far), but my husband (of 20 years) and I played out the role, at my request, of non-consensual rape, and it was exhilarating. It was brutal and unnerving, and painful at times, but it was what I needed. I was scared, because I knew I had absolutely no control, and shaking and almost crying at times, but the orgasms I had were incredible, and the catharsis of living out this fantasy with one I loved and trusted implicitly was incredible. And our relationship has grown closer since, and continues to do so.

We haven't felt the need to do this since, but I know if we ever do that it will be wonderful, whoever instigates it.

I don't know if the initial incident is what sparked my fantasies or if it is the need for a "loss of control" situation, but I know that it is very satisfying to me to have done this, and to know that it is available again, should the need arise.

I guess what I am trying to do here is to give a personal insight, for those who are curious, based on my experiences in both the actual act of rape (anger) and what the boss was talking about* (CAFL).²⁰⁸

"KNIGHTS EARN THE NAME" (18 AUGUST 2004)

* "When rape is a gift," 15 March 2004.

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The Knight in Shining Armor* allegory arises from the man saving the woman from the dragon that is within her. If a man is unable to accomplish that task, he quickly loses his luster in her eyes.

Some of the saddest relationships have been those in which the woman says, "I really don't know why we got married." To be sure, there was sex. There may even have been children. But there was no lasting intimacy. The two did not become one.

On that level, it does not much matter whom someone marries. It is a marriage of convenience rather than a partnership. In retrospect, so much of what they shared together was faked.

Conversely, if a woman has emotional baggage—and most women harbor latent guilt and frustration within themselves—and the man is able to lift it from her, so that she can become the true person trapped within herself, then she will be come his. Sadly, if her burden is not lifted from her—liberating her from the dragon of her seething thoughts and maddening swirl of ideas—then she is still held in the castle of her mind zealously guarded by the dragon.

The frustration of trying to claw her own way out of the stone-like dungeon into which her dragon has placed her only adds to her anger—which she often takes out on the man whom she, subconsciously at least, thought would rescue her. Bickering, faultfinding, and dissatisfaction grow until the dragon con-

sumes her, and she becomes the beast that once held her soul captive.

There are no knights in her mind. She sees only weak men beyond the printed and televised romance novels into which she so desperately tries to escape her plight. As the woman scorned in her own mind, she may even plunge into prescriptions and alcohol in an effort to escape her plight. She may even try to prove her worth by spinning straw into gold in the hope of being rescued by a king.

To be *taken in hand* is to be led—sometimes dragged—through the various halls, up the stairs, and through the doors of her mind until the woman emerges into the bright sunlight of martial bliss in the arms of the man who cared enough to rescue her. There, safe from the dragon that held her captive, she is free to be held, wooed, and loved as she never thought possible.

Only then will she see her knight. Until then, the man in her life might as well be just another toad hopping about, gobbling insects, and leaving droppings.²⁰⁹

"I AM A MAN LOOKING FOR THE ONE. HOW DOES TAKEN IN HAND APPLY IN THE DATING PHASE?" (24 AUGUST 2004)

Given that Taken In Hand relationships are *married* ones, if you are a man who wants a Taken In Hand relationship, how do you proceed before you are married, when you are trying to find the right person, or still just in the dating phase with the right person?

* "There is no knight in shining armour," 9 August 2004.

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There is no recipe for the creation of a delectable relationship, because a relationship arises out of who you and your girlfriend are as *individuals*, and out of your interactions together. A relationship evolves over time. It is not possible to create it overnight by an act of will.

Having said that, here are a few very broad guidelines:

It would be a mistake to act as if you are already married: it takes time to create a good relationship, and if you act as though you are already married, that might well seem off-putting presumptuous to the woman you are merely dating.

On the other hand, it would also be a mistake to act as if you would never want to be in charge. If your girlfriend wants to be with a man who will be in charge, she is likely to feel compelled to test you to check that you will be capable of being in charge and that you have sufficient self-respect not to put up with any nonsense.

Annoying though this testing is, it is necessary, because many men do not want to be in charge and some might want to but have not quite managed to learn how yet, and for a woman who wants a Taken In Hand relationship, it would be a disaster to marry such a man. She wants a happy marriage just like you do, so she needs to be sure that you are the right man for her, just as you need to be sure she is the right woman for you. Think of it as a dance the two of you do to learn enough about each other to decide whether or not you are right for each other.

So while you are just dating, when the woman you are dating does or

says something unacceptable to you, that seems disrespectful to you, or like a test of your mettle, *do not* let it pass to be polite, or because you want to be a nice guy.

If you let a woman treat you disrespectfully or otherwise trample your boundaries, she will despise you for it. She doesn't want you to let her do that! She *wants* you to nip that nonsense in the bud. And if you do that, you will thereby release her from the fear that you might not be willing or able to wear the trousers in the relationship. When she no longer fears that she might find herself wearing the trousers in a relationship with you, she will relax and the testing will stop.

You may have noticed, when you were at school, that some teachers had complete control of the class without ever having to shout, while other teachers shouted and punished pupils constantly and yet never managed to get even a modicum of control of the class. Teach yourself to be like the teachers who could control the class just by the quiet force of their will.

Yes this is something you can teach yourself. Plenty of men manage to teach themselves to have this power. In addition to reading this site, you might like to read Athol Kay's website* and perhaps comb other Game sites and PUA (pickup artistry)/seduction sites for relevant helpful ideas. Much of the advice in the Game and PUA worlds appears

* See:
<<https://web.archive.org/web/20130130092427/http://marriedmansexlife.com/>>

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to have been written by men who unfortunately have a chip on their shoulder—i.e., it is not aimed at men with Taken In Hand inclinations. Nevertheless, if you have the patience, do sift through all that bad advice to find the good stuff. Do be warned that some of it is positively chilling even if you have quite a strong stomach. But there is a huge body of knowledge containing much useful truth in the Game and PUA worlds for those who have the patience to find it.

But let's get back to the subject in hand: How should you decisively deal with tests of your mettle? Instead of shouting, glaring at her or throwing things, try to deal with her nonsense calmly, kindly but very *firmly*. It is perfectly reasonable for you to require your date to treat you well. Do not feel guilty about imposing your will in this respect! She wants you to impose your will in this respect! Respect yourself and expect others to respect you too. You deserve to be treated with respect, don't you?

You have boundaries. Enforce them. Having good personal boundaries is necessary for both partners for the creation of a good relationship. Those who allow others to walk all over them grow to resent the other person, and that makes a good relationship impossible. So both you and your date each need to be a person with firm boundaries. Having and enforcing good boundaries in no way makes you a bad person. On the contrary, it makes you a person who makes others feel comfortable. When a person lacks good boundaries, those interacting with

him never quite know where they are with him, and that is very unsettling.

When you are being firm, your frame of mind is important. One of the biggest mistakes people make is feeling defensive or angry or entitled—that she *owes* you this. She doesn't owe you this, and even if she does, expecting her to grit her teeth and give you this because it's her duty is simply not smart psychologically. Why would she or you or anyone else want to be with someone with that attitude? It's just not attractive, fun, sexy or in any way enjoyable, is it? So the way to think about this is to keep in the forefront of your mind the idea that the purpose of you being firm is to create a hot, sexy, exciting relationship that you both find enjoyable and satisfying.

Yes, of course you want to be treated with respect and so on, but that requires firmness with a positive attitude (think: firmness is hot for the girl!), not firmness coming from a sense of entitlement, anger or defensiveness. If you always keep in mind that the point is not that she jolly well *owes* you this, but that this is necessary to create and maintain respect and sexual attraction, you are much less likely to make a mistake when you take a stand.

Being firm definitely does not mean threatening to dump your woman unless she changes her behaviour, unless you have no confidence in your ability to nip her nonsense in the bud or you have lost interest anyway. What it means is that you call her on it, and tell her calmly that her behaviour is unacceptable and that you deserve re-

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spect and that you expect her to treat you accordingly. If she does not immediately change her attitude or apologise, end the interaction and leave her to think about what you have said for an hour or two or even a day or two in some cases. Then, again, continue not to put up with poor treatment, and see whether her behaviour improves. But throughout these interactions, never forget the idea of *firminess as highly erotic and soothing for the girl*. The moment you forget that and think *fight!*, all is lost.

To make it more likely that she will improve, assume that she has no idea what you want, and give her *clear, specific, concrete* instructions. Tell her what she could have said or done that *would* have been acceptable. Women are not mind readers, any more than men are. Tell her what to say to you when she feels frustrated/angry/upset or whatever. Again, keep in mind the idea that you telling her what to do is erotic, not unpleasant. Always assume the best about her, or interact with her as though you do. Think: she's a good person who will *want* to improve, and will find my bossiness erotic, not: she's an evil witch. If you do think she's an evil witch, perhaps it's time to find someone more worthy of you?!

Explain to your girl that you are looking for a woman who will treat you with respect because you are not the kind of man who finds the idea of lying in the mud and being walked all over to your taste. Look her in the eye and watch her reaction as you add quietly and confidently sure of her inherent goodness: "You wouldn't actually want to

be with a man who would let you walk all over him, *would* you?"

If she feels misjudged in this particular case, it is possible that you have indeed misjudged this particular little incident—you are a fallible human being—but do not get side-tracked into arguing about this little incident. Instead, acknowledge that as you are a fallible human being it is possible that you are mistaken in this case, and then quietly and calmly ask her again to confirm that she would not want to be with a man who would let her walk all over him. When she settles down and confirms that indeed she wouldn't, say "Good", give her a hug and gently but firmly redirect her attention to an unrelated matter to chivvy her into a better mood. (Example: "Now, let's go for a nice walk together. Where's your coat?")

None of this involves shouting at her, striking her or punishing her. What you are doing is quietly insisting that you be treated well, and appealing to the good person you know is there in the woman you are dating, and creating sexual attraction and excitement by being firm with a positive spirit. People tend to live up to expectations. Expect the best from her and she will give you her best most of the time. Dealing with nonsense in this way is far more powerful than expressing your anger in a less controlled way.

When an interaction goes wrong and you can see that you are fighting or about to fight, acknowledging that you are fallible and that it is therefore indeed possible that you might be mistaken in this particular case *takes the fight out of the*

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situation. It is unexpected. It may seem weak to you but actually it is very strong. When you feel weak, you try to protect and defend yourself. When you feel strong, you can afford to acknowledge that you aren't infallible and that it is possible in a given case that you could be mistaken. The point you want to get across to the woman you are dating is not about this particular incident, so you lose nothing by acknowledging the *possibility* that you might possibly be mistaken. The important point is that you want her to treat you well. So having acknowledged that indeed you are fallible, again *quietly and calmly tell her how she must treat you.*

Whether or not you are mistaken in a given case, you are not mistaken in the larger point, which is that no matter how much easier it might be just to let such incidents go, you know that is not good for the health of a relationship longer term. You know that she is not a woman who would want to be with a wimp who would accept poor treatment, and that she is likely to lose attraction to you if you aren't firm. Tell her the truth. There is no need to keep this a secret. Explain all this to her. It is perfectly reasonable. You are not trying to put one over on her, you are trying to create a hot, delightful relationship with the woman you want—hot and delightful for both of you, not just you. Even if you *are* mistaken in a given incident, she can still see the reasonableness of what you are trying to do.

If you have ideas about how you might deal with nonsense if you were married to the woman, and

those ideas are inappropriate to mention in a dating situation, you could tell her what you would do if you were married, but don't say something like that unless you are actually thinking of marrying her.

You could say something like: "You may be able to get away with x now, but that is only because we are just dating; if we were married things would be very different." Watch her reaction carefully. If she appears unmoved by such a statement, consider the possibility that she is either not Taken In Hand inclined or not that into you. In that case consider the possibility that you have let her get away with too much nonsense, and she is now, as a result, losing attraction to you.

If you do know you want to marry this girl, it is better to err on the side of doing whatever it takes to nip nonsense in the bud than on the side of being the nice guy. If you have set a wedding date and have issued the invitations, do not wait until you are married to enforce your will. How you deal with her nonsense now will set the tone for your marriage, so enforce your boundaries very firmly now. You can help your woman learn how to treat you. It is in your power. She wants to learn. It's hot for her.

Whatever your stage of dating, pay attention to your woman's reactions and calibrate your actions accordingly. Each woman is different. There is no one-size-fits-all answer. You need to do what you yourself think best given who you and she are as individuals and given your relationship together.

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Your relationship is a system. You can change it, and your woman, by making small changes yourself. You do not need to feel helpless.* You have the power. See this post† for more on this.²¹⁰

"LEARNING THE ROPES" (25 AUGUST 2004)

[The following was an email to my girlfriend.]

So, there I was, driving around minding my own business...like a good cop always does, when the clarity light went off in my head...it was quite blinding actually. I wanted to call you and say, okay, I got it. I've had an epiphany of sorts, and I wanted to share it with you. So, I will attempt to recall to memory what I came up with, from the idea, to a more practical sense of what I'm feeling.

As I said before, while I was driving around, I began thinking... You know, Ken, try to remember what it was like when you first became a cop. Now you might think, WTF does this have to do with anything? Just bear with me on this one.

When I first became a cop, I was really gung ho about being the All-

American PO-leece...I studied and read everything I could get my hands on regarding law enforcement (not to mention hours upon hours watching COPS on TV) LOL! Anyway, I knew that this was a calling for me—almost as if it were ordained by God for me to do this. I asked questions, I read books, I watched training videos, I talked with people who'd been doing this job for years.

Much to my dismay, they were vague on a lot of the "meat" of the job. Many times, I would ask, "Well if this happens, then what?" and more times than not, their answers would be something to the effect of, "Well, there's nothing set in concrete on stuff like that because every situation is different." They'd go on to say, "A lot of situations are similar, but *never* the same." So, oh man, I thought... I need to know everything about everything in police work in order to be good at it....

Well, as you might have guessed, I made a *ton* of mistakes. This was nothing like I expected. I thought, well I remember seeing this or hearing about this situation, but damn it, there's a different twist this time, so, now what?! I felt like I couldn't do it, like I was wrong about every single facet of the job.

It wasn't until I'd been doing this for about three years that I noticed a significant change in the way I handled things.. You know, something would happen and I'd think, okay, here's what we're going to do...and *voila*—it was right.

I can remember back to my Academy days and listening (haphazardly) to my instructor on domestic

* [This is an answer to a frequently-asked question: this page is part of the FAQ. Please try to ensure that your post is answering the question or discussing the above post. The question is: **I am a man looking for the one. How does Taken In Hand apply in the dating phase?**]

† "I want us to have a Taken In Hand relationship. How can I persuade my wife?" 11 November 2012.

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violence and rookie officers. He said, "It's funny to witness a rookie officer on his first domestic assault call. The scene is complete chaos...lots of yelling, screaming, crying, etc. The rookie officer tries his very best to be diplomatic, telling everyone to please calm down; sir this, sir that; ma'am this, ma'am that—many times just making things worse."

The instructor then said, "What's amazing is that you can watch that same officer, similar situation, but three years later—and the officer has that policeman scowl, walks up and says, "Okay, *you*: sit the fuck down and shut the fuck up" and he turns to the other person on the scene and says, "and *you* sit *your* ass over there and be quiet until I ask you to say something"."

So the thought I was having tonight is...I don't *have* to know everything in the world about being dominant... I'm inherently dominant and have been for a long time. I have just never acted on my true nature before now. I know I'm bound to make a ton of mistakes, just like I did in my job, before I'm able to have it down pat.

Dominance to me means being a leader, being kind and compassionate, fair and honest—but stern. A truly dominant man doesn't take his woman for granted and knows the difference between loving, intimate discipline, and being cruel and hurtful.

There's no set way of doing things, and it will be different for us from how it may be for another couple. What I have to do is concentrate on what is right for us, be consistent and be myself. What I also have to

do is not think of dominance as a label, or what I think *you* think I should be like.

What I do need from you is your patience and your support. I need you to understand that I don't know everything there is to know about taking you in hand—although I can handcuff you in more ways that you can imagine ;-) ... I will need you to be have an undying faith in my ability to lead us, guide us, and support us. I won't let anything or anyone harm you, and I do value your opinion and your judgement.

This means so much to me. It means more to me than I know how to articulate, that you're, in a sense, giving me my freedom and my dignity back. Do you remember when you told me that I made you feel like a real woman, that no one else ever has? Well, you make me feel like a real man... and just so you know... no one else *ever* has.

All of this has stirred my very soul and for the first time in my life, I feel like what I'm doing here is worthwhile. Now, that may sound a little extreme, but I feel liberated and strong... kind of like my eyes have been opened—and I have you to thank for that.

So, in short, with all that I've said you've done for me, I want you to know that you have *my* loyalty, trust, respect, and admiration. I think that a man—or anyone else for that matter—who doesn't appreciate being shown a glimpse of the greatness that that person has the potential for, is doomed from the beginning.

I hope that you have a very clear perception of how I feel and what

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I've thought about all night tonight. I hope that you had one terrific night at work, and I hope that you have the sweetest of dreams... and most importantly, I hope that you know that I'm just head over heels crazy about you... There are not enough adjectives in Webster's to describe my feelings for you. Goodnight to you, my precious Anna Grace....²¹¹

"DECADES OF DISCIPLINE, DECADES OF HAPPY MARRIAGE" (26 AUGUST 2004)

Since the day I resurrected Tom Newman's old traditional marriage board a few years ago, one question has emerged in private and public conversation: after many decades of marriage, why do I still find it necessary to spank my wife. (It is a variation of the old "do you still beat your wife?" accusation.)

Another recurring question is why did I start or, in variation, why does she let me? Then, there is that recurring question about children.

The first real spanking that I gave my wife was before we were married. It was for playing a little two-faced game.

That was, it turned out, the first time anyone had spanked her hard enough to let her know that they really meant business! I reportedly left quite visible marks even through a wool dress. No one had ever done that to *her* before. She was furious.

While she refused to speak to me for three days thereafter, she later concluded that, not only was it something that her father should have done, it was really what she wanted in a man. The problem was

that it had hurt worse than she thought it should – which is why she had thoroughly inspected the damage!

We have never had formal house rules as such. Neither my wife nor I wanted the type of marriage that our parents had (neither of our mothers was spanked and it showed on occasion) and, independently before we began dating, we reached the conclusion that discipline needed to be a part of any permanent relationship into which we entered – either jointly or severally.

Originally, spanking was primarily used to either set our marriage back on track or prevent things from getting too far out of kilter. For both of us, the marriage was a commitment rather than a disposable diversion. It was something we wanted.

At various points in time, my wife has admitted that her life would have been a mess if she had not married a man who could handle her. Like many women, she wanted a man who was not only good *to* her, but good *for* her.

Although, I have spanked for lying, stubbornness, and disobedience, I have never spanked for dirty dishes in the sink. Those, I will wash before I spank her over them. Likewise, the vacuum cleaner fits my hand as well as it does hers.

From the early beginnings, discipline in our house has evolved into a cleansing. And, that is what it is today—a catharsis. Over the past couple of decades, we have found the desirable frequency to be about once or twice a month.

Although she expects any spanking to get *through*, my wife left the

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decision-making up to me as to when and how—even over her objections. Sometimes she has been disciplined three times in one day!

The “thermometer,” as she calls it, which triggers a spanking is the palpable tension within her buttocks. It is quite accurate. Although she can feel the stress building, she expects me to discover the problem and provide the necessary remedy.

One of the curious things we have discovered over the years is that, even through menopause and the various problems of post-modern life, those all-important little numbers from her various physical exams and lab tests have remained in the normal range. She and I both believe that the usual tensions of daily life are not allowed to accumulate for long periods of time in her system before being purged.

Probably our biggest secret has been that we never really made a big deal out of domestic discipline—we just did it and went on with our lives. Meanwhile, it seems, those who do make a big deal out of it are those who do not practice it—especially if they suspect they should be.

Sometimes, not making a big deal out of it can mean being accidentally discovered. Years ago, despite living in a rather large old house, we were discovered by our oldest when we failed to close the door long after bedtime.

Instead of blaming the child's curiosity, we took the time to honestly explain what was happening, why it sometimes needed to be done, and gave assurances of our love. Then,

we asked to be left alone and the child obliged.

While we were closely watched over the next several days, our interaction seemed to satisfy any lingering doubts.

From that experience, especially as other parents got divorces and their children shared their grief with ours, I came to the conclusion that children understand spanking much better than they do acrimony and divorce.

Later, our children admitted that our marriage was a rock of stability in their lives. It was something on which they could count.

In reflection, I am not wholly convinced that discovering that their mother gets spanked is the worst thing that can happen to children. In the context of a loving family, it might prove to be beneficial.

One benefit in our family was that our need to discipline declined. The word was out. Not even being a grown-up made bottoms safe!²¹²

“DON'T FORGET YOUR WHIP” (27 AUGUST 2004)

Unless there is some mitigating circumstance, women generally feel more comfortable with a man who will take charge. It is not a man's tyranny that hurts woman so much as his indifference. It is widespread, even epidemic, apathy and indifference that may be ripping into women's health today.

Nature abhors a vacuum. Yet, when women try to fill the vacuum created by a weak man, all sorts of problems emerge.

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I tell men that, if they really are serious about wanting to spend the rest of their life with a woman, it perfectly normal to want to turn her over their knee at some point—and, if they want to live in relative peace with the woman, they had better act on their desire at some point.

A woman knows that the pain visited on her bottom is meaningful only if the man does it because he loves her. Otherwise, she will build a stone wall around her emotions. That is why I recommend that men turn women over their knee early in the relationship—before they get *surprised*.

For one thing, it gets the “he hit me” out of the way in a sane and safe fashion. It also sends a signal that, whatever professors told her in women's studies, she can be spanked and getting spanked is not a traumatizing experience that will ruin the rest of her life.

If the man is thorough in his task, he gets to see what a real witch the love of his life can be—and it gets that out of the way as well. Once all the unpleasantness is dispensed with, they can get down to the real job of building a relationship.

I agree with Friedrich Nietzsche.* Whether he uses it or not, women do need to know that the man has a whip. And sometimes, it is necessary to get beyond the polite and tasteful, and into the *rape* aspect of discipline.

For some women, it might begin with a woman threatening a man with a call to the police if he lays a hand on her. The battle royal might start when he physically hauls her into the bedroom. (The “Put me down this instant!” demand.)

Other women might go along with an unwanted spanking until it really begins to hurt—as when her husband transgresses from laying it on her bottom to thrashing the back of her thighs. Still another woman may suspect or know that her loss of composure is going to be overheard by others.

It does not matter at what point the resistance occurs. Even the reason does not matter much. It might be that she has told him that she will not tolerate a belt being used on her. Or it might be being turned over his knee like a child—so she cannot easily tighten her buns and which causes abdominal distress—that sets her off.

It might be that she is so frustrated about so many things over which she does not have any real control that she believes that her normally loving husband has turned into an unreasonable tyrant.

The particulars are not nearly as important as the predictable explosion. Figuratively speaking, her curses may blister the wallpaper! She may call her husband names that would shock her mother. She may throw a temper tantrum that would positively astound a spoiled-rotten two-year-old.

When it happens, no matter what form it takes, the man simply gets the woman beyond it. In the end,

* “You go to a woman? Do not forget your whip.” Nietzsche: *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (XVIII: Old and Young Women)

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both know that he is in control—not her. This is the shrew tamed.

Men who can take control bring healing power to a woman's mind. A woman is not likely to engage in fantasy when she is with a strong man. Nor, from my observations, is she as likely to seek escape in novels or mind-altering substances.

Much the same methods that are used to tame a shrew can also be used to create a prostitute or a slave. The difference is in the *words* the man uses when the woman is at her most vulnerable. For good or for evil, given time, the woman eventually becomes what the man makes her.

The man who takes control of a woman does just that. When it comes time to smack a woman's bottom he chooses the time, place, position, instrument, rhythm, duration, and the like. By doing so, he creates a contradiction in that, while very little he does at the moment pleases her, everything he does is for her. In the end, both he and she must understand that he is in control. The ritual is a contest of wills in which he wins without doing her any permanent damage, and she respects him as a result.

For the man, it is a time-consuming endeavor—much like taking a second job, pursuing an demanding career, or catering to an expensive mistress—that turns a willful woman into an willing wife. That is why, for many men, it is easier to find another than to make the commitment that a woman really needs.

The man's effect on the woman will be like the cycles of malaria's

chills and fever. Whether he caresses her lips or blisters her bottom, he will have her undivided attention. More importantly, she will have his. Her groans of erotic ecstasy will blur with her cries of fiery pain until even she will not be able to sort them out in her mind. They are all one in her mind.

That is why I believe that, when it comes time to face the music, many women prefer nudity. She knows whatever the man does, it will be because he loves her and she wants absolutely nothing to stand in the way of that experience! It is where sin and sensuality mingles with pain and penance to produce love and respect.

While I have little or no inclination to withhold a well-deserved spanking as punishment, I do believe that customary punishment should be administered at the man's discretion and should be little affected by the woman's machinations. In other words, she should not be allowed to dictate the time and place any more than to interfere with meddlesome hands or verbal combativeness.

In a curious way, the phallus and the *rod* (stick, cane, paddle, etc.) are much the same. Both are controlled by the man and are used on the woman. Both can bring a woman into subjection. The phallus with a child. The *rod* by denying her composure. Both deny the woman control over her life—which, of course, is why feminists object to women being subjected to either.²¹³

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"WANTING A MASTERFUL MAN" (29 AUGUST 2004)

When I was about 11, my best friend and I would talk about the masterful men we wanted, in great detail. Interesting that this urge to be mastered came long before any urge to have sex. Later on I learned that I shouldn't want that. I shouldn't want a man to be stronger than me; I shouldn't want him to provide for me; and I certainly shouldn't want him to correct my bad behavior over his knee! I stuffed all these desires into a box and labeled it "outdated desires that belong in romance novels, not real life." But the desires kept seeping out of the box.

I grew up strong, smart, and independent, yet I always harbored the secret wish that I would meet a man who was even stronger. I never wanted to hold myself back, to pretend to be less than I was to make a guy feel masculine. And yet, when I felt a strong sexual attraction to someone, I immediately wanted to submit to him and be disciplined by him. I never got more than a threat or two, which just left me wondering what I'd have to do to make him carry out that threat.

I remember one guy I was dating saying that he liked me because I was so independent, and how it annoyed him that so many women wanted to be taken care of. My desire to date him died that moment. But part of me agreed with him, and was ashamed of my desire to be taken care of.

The crux of the matter is that we don't *need* to be taken care of, but

we *want* to be. We're not helpless weaklings, but we want a man who can stand up to us. We're not generally submissive people, but when we meet the right man, we want to submit to *him*. And it is difficult and confusing to grow up with these desires in a women's lib culture.²¹⁴

"EMPOWERING DOMINANCE" (31 AUGUST 2004)

There's nothing more attractive to me than a strong, smart, independent creative woman who has her own thing going on and loves it, but also has (as we all do) a vulnerable side—one that she honors me with by choosing to show to me and to even put me in (loving) charge of at times.

My beloved is both "my lady" and "my girl" depending on which aspect of her femininity I want to celebrate at the time. She is also "young lady" when she's been naughty, but that side of her—the bratty or mischievous little girl—is also deeply loveable to (and well-loved by) me. There is no part of her that I reject or do not actively cherish—and of course spanking can be a wonderful way of cherishing, too.

I love the ability my natural, laid-back dominance gives me to cherish the woman in my life. I love the way that my dominance allows me to creatively, persistently and (but of course) forcefully and uncompromisingly express just how much I think of my beloved and just how much she means to me. It is important to me that she not only feel my love, but that it truly touch and

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affect her—not by shaping her to my will, but by helping her become her truest self. If she is a warrior, I want our intimate relationship to help her fight better, if she is an artist, I want it to help her create with more ease and passion, if she is herself a caregiver, I want it to help make nurturing others easier and less exhausting.

It's a dreadfully cliched word nowadays, after being battered with over-use and misuse, but if there is one thing that I truly want our relationship to give to my love, it is this—empowerment.²¹⁵

"WHY WOULD A WOMEN WANT TO BE SPANKED?" (3 SEPTEMBER 2004)

A woman's desire for a *naked over-the-knee spanking* is twofold. Part of her wants to be wanted. She wants to *belong* to someone who really cares about her. Part of her wants to be disciplined, cleansed, and perhaps even healed.

It is only at a level of getting beyond physical pain that spanking has any meaning. Otherwise, the exercise is a parlor game of make-believe of daddy's naughty little girl getting her bottom smacked for being very bad. A woman's emotional risks in pretending are no greater than going to the doctor's office, climbing up on the examination table, and putting her feet in the metal stirrups to have her private parts examined. Although exposed under the circumstances, she is not defenseless. She is *steeled* for the experience.

When a woman becomes vulnerable—and women become naked when they want to be vulnerable—she can feel whether or not she is loved. Her nudity is not so much a temptation for the man as a test of his character. Often, the woman is less aware of her state of undress as is a more naïve man. She sacrifices modesty for knowledge. After all, who or what a man truly is inside cannot be easily hidden from a naked woman!

The man who truly loves a woman is not always easy on her. There is a passion within him that burns beyond lust. It complements that of the woman in using her nakedness as a means to an end. The means is the spanking; the end is the relationship. So it is that the two can become one—which is what the woman wants anyway.

Although a woman may hate the idea that *she* needs a spanking, she will also often feel the need to be punished—wanting it to hurt and eventually despising a timid man—she seeks an experience that goes beyond being transformed from naughty to nice.

For the man, spanking springs from a desire to have the woman wholly—body and soul—coupled with awareness that this is how to *have* her! The man's involvement with the woman is not a business-like arrangement where one party can *fire* the other at will.

He wants this woman. He is active. She is passive, although she wants this man to have her. Together, they want each other.

Instead of seeking counseling or getting divorced, they work out

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their differences the old-fashioned way—on a very intimate and personal level. (Women never boast about having *faked it* during a serious spanking!) In the process, the man goes from what the woman *admits* is required to what she *knows* is necessary to get through to her. The spanking goes:

- from being erotic
- past anger ("That's enough. #\$\$%&@, what are you trying to do!")
- through being punishment ("Yes, Sir.")
- to being a cleaning out of all sorts of emotional baggage that tumble out as a mixture of confessions and genuine crying.

Consequently, a wise man gives the woman getting spanked *permission* to say all sorts of things that she would never dream of revealing otherwise. The *permission* is not so much explicit as in his willingness to listen and understand whatever anguish she releases. The wise man will not hold anything she says against her as she expels whatever demons haunt her mind.

If the man gets down deep enough inside her—usually through a series of spankings that build upon the soreness in her bottom leftover from the last spanking—inhibitions go out of the window. Her carefully crafted mystique—her protective layers that keep just any man from getting too close to her—get stripped from her. She is psychologically undressed.

She is no longer her own woman. When he is finished, she is so weak physically and psychologically that she can be destroyed by his words.

At this point, the man can make the woman anything he wants her to be. He can make her a strong wife, a weak woman, a prostitute—anything. That is why women need to pick their men carefully. Because once a man taps into his natural power over a woman, she belongs to him.*

Yet, if the man truly loves her, she *feels joined* in the ultimate consensual relationship.²¹⁶

"CRAVING PROTECTION, LEARNING TO TRUST" (5 SEPTEMBER 2004)

To my husband:

Do you fully understand what it means to be a husband? What is expected of you, your role? I know I do not know what my role as a wife is. I certainly did not have a role model in either of those areas. What I learned was to nag you, undermine you, and assume you are in the wrong. I learned to ignore your needs and always fulfill mine. I learned to humiliate you, to unman you, to go for days hardly talking to you.

I thought that by recognizing these negative behaviors in my role models I would not repeat them. Well that was foolish of me, because I did not know what the alternative behaviors were.

In this area I need a lot of help. I need to find a way to stop telling

* [This is an answer to a frequently-asked question: this page is part of the FAQ. Please try to ensure that your post is answering the question or discussing the above post. The question is: **Why would a woman want to be spanked?**]

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you what to do, to stop nagging you, and to stop checking up on you to see if you have done everything correctly.

I have been trying to figure out why I behave this way. I don't want to be driving. I know you will get me where I need to be so why can't I just relax and let you do it? I think it is a lack of trust and respect on my part. I need to learn complete and total trust in you. I am so sorry I have not trusted you. I am so sorry I have been a back-seat driver in your life. I want to change. For you, for me, for us.

It's not that I have no trust in you, and it's not that I do not respect you as a person: it's something deeper than that. Something buried very deep.

On the day we were married you said you had an overwhelming urge to protect me. Just as your instincts tell you to protect, mine give me an overwhelming urge to be protected by you. This means that if I am, as it were, being attacked by a wild animal, I trust with my very life that your spear arm is strong and true.

These are ancient instincts. There are no wild animals now, but I still crave your protection and you crave to give it. You have told me many times that you are old-fashioned in your beliefs. I think I was wrong to tell you to try not to be that way. To do that would be to fight very powerful and perfectly normal drives.

I have my own personal demons that I fight, but you are my husband and I want you to fight for me so that I feel safe. In a sense I want you to protect me from my worst enemy, myself. I struggle with my intellec-

tual side and I feel scared, vulnerable, confused; and all the while my inner cave woman wants you to come and protect me from the chaos. In this primitive part of my mind the trust and respect isn't always there. This is what I think causes some of my negative behavior.

When I back-seat drive I am pushing your buttons, needling you, questioning your methods and trying to provoke you to do something about it. I do not do this consciously: at the time I just feel anxious and irritable. Only after considerable contemplation do I see that this is what is actually happening.

What are possible solutions? We have both agreed that some structure is needed, and I think you might need to use physical discipline to enforce your control sometimes. This is going to be a mass undertaking. It will take a long time to get right. We will make mistakes and we'll have to rethink and rearrange a lot, so we need to think of this as a work in progress and try not to get discouraged.

I want you to be in charge. I am giving you consent to act apparently non-consensually when you think it necessary. By giving you this permission I am showing that I have confidence in you. I am showing that I totally and completely trust that you will do the right thing for our relationship. This will be you protecting me from harm in the most intimate possible way. In this way you will be honoring those feelings you experienced on our wedding day.

This is a way to satisfy your dominant inner caveman. You will be

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providing love and comfort in what I hope is a most satisfying way for both of us. I realize that this is a huge responsibility that I am putting on you. Can you do it? It will only work if I trust that you can, I know.

To trust you in this manner will be incredibly challenging for me. I have never really learned to truly trust anyone. All the things that were supposed to be stable in my life were not. But I love you so much that I want to give you back what I have taken from you. I hope that this will boost your self-esteem and make you feel more confident and successful. I hope that it will make you feel like the man you are—like the man who, on his wedding day, told his new bride of his overwhelming desire to protect her.²¹⁷

“UNDERSTANDING” (6 SEPTEMBER 2004)

“I will take what I own.”

Words the select handful of women I have progressed to physical intimacy with have heard me speak. And have understood. Understood both because of what had flowed between us from that first instant. And too, for the time we had taken from that first moment to build the requisite intimacy necessary for a full understanding of what was conveyed within.

An understanding in which, each woman has come to know, not only that primal animal within me—the one that craves to take her, to own her, its hunger ravening, firing the desire of the physical and spiritual to searing—but too, my warmth. My

laughter. And my dreams. And in so knowing all of this, know that I could never hurt her.

And know too, that I see that animal within her. The one that hungers to be taken. To be owned. And yet it will rage in its struggle against me. Fighting helplessly with its all. The battle moving far beyond that of straining muscles. The somatic, only the final expression of that intimacy which has brought us here. An intimacy in whose safety that bestial core within her has been set free. Setting loose an animal which will fight until that last moment, when she is engulfed by the reassurance that my strength—something which has nothing to do with the power of my flesh—cannot be surmounted. A denouement foretold from the beginning. The promise of this knowledge, and the safety it gives, allowing all that which is within her to roar in its freedom. A freedom complete in that exquisite release of submission as she falls to her knees before the one whose strength surrounds her, has become a part of her. Owning her. And there, all responsibility ripped away, a burning red need that encompasses all.

In that rape which is consensual, we both know what is happening. We both know what is unlocked in that descent into raw, untamed primalness. And at that moment, neither of us would want anything less. And afterwards? A man and a woman who have seen and wanted all in the other, and in this want, given all of themselves. The knowledge now born, that all of each is known, is felt, and is hungered for by the other. A knowledge

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which gives depth beyond measure to a relationship.

Yet why do I rape? And why does the woman I am with want me to rape her? The answer to both these questions is found in the paragraph above. I hunger to rape her, for all that I see within her. All that makes her glow before my eyes. All that makes me crave to know all of her. Take all of her. And in so doing, give all of myself to her. A hunger which, is mirrored within her, where, as a woman, she sees all that which is within me. All that which makes me burn so brightly before her eyes, and makes her hunger to have my strength, my warmth, all that I am, take all that she is. Claiming her in ownership.

But is it rape? Yes. To say that it is consensual changes the manifestation of the beast, but traces can still be seen in its family lineage marking it as of the same species as that other act of rape. The one which occurs in terror and reviling weakness. An act where inadequacy, and the consequent fear and hatred it inspires, culminates in the brutalisation of a woman.

Something which noble masculinity, which seeks to dominate, and in this way nurture, abhors. Yet, for all this, physical similarities do exist between the two acts, which are so different in every other respect. But then, this is not the only place that such stretched taxonomy links two diametrically opposed acts in the shadows of physicality.

For, as a man, I will stand and fight for the intimacy I share with a woman. And in the course of this, sometimes, I will take her across my

knees. Both in discipline, in those rare times where her behaviour is warranting of such. And too, in those far more numerous times of reassurance. Where no transgression on her behalf has occasioned the spanking she receives. The strength that enables me to do this, the strength that promises that I will fight for all I hold with her and that I will never lose it, is not of the physical. It comes from all that I feel for her. And it is this that differentiates the abuse and terror of domestic violence, with shared knowledge that, if I wish her over my knees whether for discipline, or reassurance, then that is where she will be. However much she wishes to struggle against it.

The parallels between the two acts—consensual rape, and discipline/reassurance spankings—are obvious. In both, a woman knows a bond of intimacy with her man so great that she knows that she could never be hurt. A knowledge which allows her to surrender.

Surrender to her need for submission.

Surrender to her need to sometimes fight against this.

Surrender to her need for her man's strength. A strength that promises it will always hold her to him.

Surrender.

And at the end. After I have spoken those words. There are always others. Carried on her voice. A cry of completion from her heart of one meaning, whatever the words that flow forth.

"You own me. I am yours."

Surrender.²¹⁸

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"WOMEN WANT MEN WHO ARE MORE DOMINANT" (9 SEPTEMBER 2004)

Michael W. says that he used to think that women liked it if men seemed soft, weak, and romantic, but now he says that women want a man with "unstoppable power"! He tells men—

If there is one thing that turns women off more than anything else, it's a man with a lack of dominance. And an attractive woman can smell a lack of dominance like a shark smells blood.

No one is attracted to someone who conveys a sense of being powerless. When it comes to being a **man**, however, power is not only important, it's **everything**. ... A woman is **never** attracted to a man who seems to be "equal" with her. In some major way, he has to be **more** than her. ... To feel feminine, she must be with a man who is **masculine**. When a woman is with a guy who is not dominant, she feels like he is just another **girl**.

Having written about the attraction of the alpha male and masculine power,* myself, I can't help thinking that there is some truth in this—for me. But I know women for whom a dominant man would feel like a bully. These women seek men who are almost as soft as they are. (I also know women who avoid dominant men for political reasons in spite of themselves, but that's another story.) One friend of mine and her man

have told me that they love each other because they are both "soft and giving".

So I have long thought that not all submissive individuals enjoy being with a dominant person, and that not all dominant individuals would be happy with a submissive person. To some dominant individuals, submissive individuals are insufficiently exciting.

Perusing the internet when I should have been doing other things, I came across an article† by Professor I. E. White in which he mentions some studies on human sexuality conducted by Abraham H. Maslow in the 1930s and early '40s. Maslow interviewed many women and concluded that they fell into three "dominance groups"—high, medium and low.

According to White, Maslow found that high dominance women are: unconventional, less religious, less tolerant of stereotypes, extroverted, sexually adventurous, less anxious, less jealous, and less neurotic. Low dominance women were found to be: conventional, religious, conforming to stereotype, introverted, sexually inhibited, and more neurotic than high dominance women. White concludes:

Findings: High dominance women were attracted to high dominance men—aggressive, self-confident, highly masculine, self-assured. Low dominance women were attracted to men who were kind, friendly, gentle,

† See:

<<https://web.archive.org/web/20021017215834/http://facultyfp.salisbury.edu/iewhite/Maslow.htm>>

* "The alpha male and masculine power," 23 April 2004.

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faithful and showed a love for children.

Even more interesting is another passage I have discovered about the same research, this time by Colin Wilson, who wrote the book *New Pathways in Psychology*. Wilson says of the three dominance groups Maslow identified:

The high dominance women were, as you might expect, precisely five per cent of the total. Sexually, they were inclined to promiscuity and experimentation—many had had lesbian experiences or tried sadomasochism. They liked males of even higher dominance, and regarded the male sexual organ as beautiful.

Medium dominance women, the largest group, were basically romantics. They liked the kind of men who would take them to restaurants with candlelight and give them flowers. They were looking for Mr Right. They were capable of a certain amount of promiscuity, but it was essentially a second best—what they really wanted was a husband who was a good father and provider. They also wanted him to be slightly more dominant than they were, but not too dominant. Very high dominance males scared them. This group didn't have any strong feelings about the male organ.

Low dominance women didn't much like sex. They liked the kind of man who would admire them from a distance for years without daring to say so. They were terrified of high dominance males, and thought the male organ downright ugly.

But all three groups needed a male who was more dominant than themselves. One very high dominance woman searched for years for such a male and when she found him she was finally happy. But he wasn't

quite dominant enough, and so she used to provoke quarrels that would end with him slapping her about, hurling her on a bed, and raping her. These sexual experiences she found most satisfactory of all. - Colin Wilson, pages 27-28 in the introduction to *The Gates of Janus*

(Incidentally, Wilson also indicates that men, too, tend to prefer women in the same dominance group as themselves.)

Whilst this categorisation perhaps cannot be taken toooooo seriously, given that not all women prefer dominant men, let alone men more dominant than they are, I have a hunch that at least some Taken In Hand readers will recognise themselves or someone they know in this passage!²¹⁹

"ACCOMMODATING NEEDS CAN'T BE DONE BY THE BOOK" (10 SEPTEMBER 2004)

Men should treat a woman in the same manner that her vagina accommodates his penis. His fit should be:

- soft enough to accommodate the most expansive of her desires,
- tight enough to let her know that he has her surrounded,
- loose enough to allow her freedom of movement,
- stimulating enough to keep her excited, and
- able to contain her when she explodes.

Where I have difficulty with personality analysis in interpersonal relationships—whether inspired by Colin Wilson, David Keirse, or

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Isabel Myers—is when it becomes the ends rather than the means.

Women choose men whom they believe able to accommodate their needs. When men fail to rise to the occasion—whether it is failing to meet a high dominance woman's challenges, to be a good husband to the medium dominance woman and father to their children, or coaxing the low dominance woman out of her shell—then difficulties flourish like bacteria on agar.

Marriage is not so much about molding another person to accommodate one's personal tastes as it is about taking the relationship in the direction that it needs to go so that intangibles such as love, happiness, and stability retain some equilibrium.

Unlike flying sophisticated aircraft, marriage is more a seat-of-the-pants experience than it is reading the gages built by someone else. There are couples who have done everything by the book and still managed to send their relationship into a tailspin from which it never recovered.

Good husbands are often like old building supers. They know how to tap the pipes to get the steam flowing again on a cold morning. They are not above getting down on their hands and knees to find the problem. They also know when and how to pull things apart when something really does need to be fixed.

These abilities are not so much things they got out of a book as from living with a woman long enough to know her inside out. Good husbands do not have to know every woman—just the one to whom he is mar-

ried and how to give her what she needs when she needs it.²²⁰

“COMMUNICATION” (15 SEPTEMBER 2004)

The one thing that is virtually guaranteed from a Taken In Hand relationship—especially one in which spanking is involved—is talking. Instead of stifling communication, taking a woman in hand causes communication to flourish.

Where communication has existed, it causes a depth of communication that was never there before. In time, even the deepest secrets emerge and disappear in the manner of Hollywood ghosts exposed to the rays of the rising sun. Chatty talk, even nervous prattle that does little more than fill an empty void, becomes a revealing of the soul. It is perhaps the ultimate liberating experience in marriage.²²¹

“A RELATIONSHIP OF EQUALS” (19 SEPTEMBER 2004)

I'm a mix of a traditional and “new” man. I'm in my late 30s, and I'm told that I carry the calm authority and purpose of a natural leader. After all these years—maybe because of all these years—a romantic heart still beats behind my (sort of, lol) tough exterior. I shed a tear or two in slushy movies. That heart is very ready for an intimate and unique partnership with a worthy woman.

I'm not looking for a “brat”. High spirits is fine. But I'm not a daddy to someone's inner little girl. I'd rather

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be mentor to her inner adult female who wants to be the best she can be for the man she loves.

I move between romantic, erotic, and discipline imperatives as the occasion demands. I've enough experience to know what I'm doing and to do it without wavering or vacillating. I have three watchwords in this: responsibility, consensuality, consistency:

Responsibility—If it's to be a spanking, it will be for real: not the pitter-patter of a glorified massage. Real means hard enough to make a difference which thoroughly reorganizes the dynamics of the situation. I'm aware of the responsibility this brings and I'm physically careful. I shun cruelty. (I'm also unmoved by the tacky posturings of BDSM, or leather or whips & chains, or any kind of degradation.)

Consensuality—is the key to the castle. Even if, in the heat of the moment it may not look like it, it must be there. For my own peace of mind I have to know that you truly need and want this. I'm authoritative, but not a brute or a bully.

Consistency—is also crucial, in two senses. For me taking in hand is about building structure and healthy routines, and acting early and decisively to maintain quality and clarity in a couplehood. Therefore what is and isn't a situation with “consequences” should be broadly predictable and consistent. It will be something the woman can depend on. Second, it will be emotionally consistent. Even wriggling under the heat of my hand she will never have cause to doubt my love or respect. I let my authority, creativity, and con-

science guide me in broadly consensual situations and make decisions and apply consequences where necessary. Authority is as authority does.

I could never be a 24/7 boss, and I don't like micromanaging (hey, let's not sweat the small stuff). I'm not overbearing—quite the opposite actually—and I'm not motivated to create fixed rules and punishments for disobedience. Fussy is not my style. Anyway, I'm looking to admire, respect, and cherish my adult partner, not patronize her or order her daily life like a child's. I certainly do not want the “serve-my-master” heavy submission lifestyle. The woman is a grownup. Her desires matter. Her opinions matter and her full personality is, I hope, too interesting to subdue. I will “build her up” not “beat her down”.

The holy grail, for me, very clearly, is to create an egalitarian relationship, with some traditional elements. So, yes, I'll expect certain behaviors and standards to be met—but nothing dumb or illogically limiting. It will be a framework, a relationship subtext, that quietly shapes expectations, behaviors, roles, and consequences while providing lots of space for you to be an equal partner and decision maker. My vision is one of a nurturing authority and reasoned accountability, rather than unbridled domination.

I will provide strong arms into which the woman can fall, and which will always hold her up and regenerate her and reassure her: where she can feel safe. But she must have her own strength too. I seek the measured wisdom a woman can

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provide. Someone to nurture me and console me when luck runs thin; someone to soothe my warrior's brow and refit me for the fight. There will be many times where I will look to her insight and advice and leadership, and depend on her (but I don't "switch".) So, as I take care of her, I'll want her to take care of me. We have different roles in this but hers is not less important or substantial.

I seek someone who is very much a woman, yet who is independent in mind and spirit and able to hold her own in the world. She can run a career (if that's her thing) but yet still bake a cake. She is an equal partner, yet still seeks a strong man with whom and for whom to build a home. (Not a superwoman, I might add, but competent and comfortable in the various roles of womanhood.)

I do think that I can reciprocate with the equivalently nuanced spectrum of traditional and new masculinity. I'm looking for someone who "gets" the value of this balance of modern and traditional and reciprocates it—who is comfortable with complexity of our roles in the current era, and yet who understands and values the injection of something ancient and archetypal into a modern marriage.²²²

"THE RESISTANT WOMAN" (20 SEPTEMBER 2004)

I've read the discussion about submissiveness vs. dominance.

What I look for in a girl is neither submissiveness nor dominance but

resistance. I want is a woman who has the strength to be *resistant*.

Other guys might like it if their girlfriends are obedient, submissive, pliable and passive but I don't like that. It's boring! I like a girl who bites back! A woman who's something to push against, and who can push me. I hate to see girls diminishing themselves and losing their natural resistance and personality when they get with a guy. I've seen it a lot. It's like they disappear. I like a woman with a big personality who doesn't give away her power and submit when she's with a real man. That's not an easy thing to find. Girls tend to cave in and become submissive even if they're tough and dominant in most parts of their life. I think it's the estrogen!

I want a woman who's *in control*. Or trying to be. Not that she'd be able to control me but she can have fun trying. I won't allow a girl to control me—I'm not that kind of guy—it's about being in control of herself. It's the attitude and strength of will I'm looking for, I'm not into being dominated.

If a girl is submissive, obedient and docile, she's probably not strong enough to withstand what I'm going to do to her. It's part of my particular brand of masculinity to be physically and mentally tough and challenging so in general I'm not attracted to girls like that. If a girl won't enjoy the rough and tumble, the physicality, the violent love and verbal jousting they'd get from me we won't have the compatibility. If she will, we might have a future.

Is it surprising the girls I'm attracted to are the more masculine look-

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ing ones who are intimidating to most guys? I see the femininity that lies beneath the surface, and that femininity is more real than the painted obvious femininity of more obviously feminine girls. When you find the femininity in a girl who doesn't let the world see it, there's a vulnerability I've not found in other kinds of women.

I don't know why women think men want obedient women. What *this* guy wants is not submissiveness but *resistance*. A worthy sparring partner in the battle of life!²²³

"HUMAN ALPHA, BETA, AND OMEGA MALES: THE REALITY" (25 SEPTEMBER 2004)

The subject of social dynamics, male/female relations, and the alpha/beta/omega dynamic is something I have been studying actively for months, both in reading and in life experience. I decided to take this study up after having had many girlfriends but having recently noticed that I was being broken up with first quite a lot. I suppose I had lost my magic after having graduated college and gotten focused on my career. My interest in this subject has nothing to do with me wanting to hurt or manipulate women.

I can surely attest that there are in fact alpha and beta males in the human portion of kingdom animalia. I would say that any woman who denies this probably denies a good portion of her own emotions and sensuality as well.

The alpha male...The funny, often charming guy who can be at a party

and hardly say a word, but his body language says everything. The guy who could most likely have sex with a good portion of the women, single or hitched, in attendance that very night (and of course no one would be the wiser).

On the other side, the beta male. He very well might be good looking, funny, etc., but after ten minutes or so in the presence of the alpha male he will try to break the alpha male's frame of mind. He does this by subtle jokes that seem innocent but are intended to degrade the alpha male's status in the eyes of others. If he is successful in making the alpha male lose his cool and take the "low road", he himself might very well be take the alpha position, for the night at least. I have seen it and been on both sides of it too many times to deny its reality. After all, it is the alpha male's world and most of the people there are just players within it.

The beta male might also readily submit to the alpha male in a genuine fashion, however. The beta male will also willingly argue with other beta males in an attempt to make others think he is the alpha male. Little does he know that the alpha male is just grinning to himself on the inside at the whole spectacle much of the time, and the women the beta male wants are more embarrassed than impressed by the beta male's behavior. Beta males often also act nice in order to curry favor with women and the alpha males.

Then there are the omega males — generally the *true* nice guys... but also what we call "losers" Generally

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avoided, and the next day hardly anyone remembers they were even there. The guy who is almost guaranteed not to have sex that night, even if a woman by luck takes a fancy to him, because his model of the world isn't such that he can take a girl home and just have sex with her if he so chooses.

This model I have just outlined is rigid and many of you will no doubt disagree with it. But there is a pecking order in life. The good news, at least, is that it isn't set in stone at birth: someone who is an alpha quarterback in high school can become a beta construction worker; and a beta or omega nerd in high school can become an alpha CEO later in his life.

And in the context of Taken In Hand—some natural alpha males who have hitherto let society fool them into thinking that Hollywood romantic beta behavior was what the world wanted of him, finally come around, as we have seen on this thread.* There are many other permutations.

How has this insight changed things for me? Frankly, I no longer put women on a pedestal. I am still a gentleman. I open doors for women—hell, I open doors for men too, so it isn't a trick to curry favor. I now understand that women get attracted and have desire just as strong as that of a man.

My view is more realistic now... No scorn, no anger that my dream as a child of having a Hollywood romance may not happen—just real-

ism. I am not the type of guy who wants to have sexual relations with every woman, but I have done experiments in pushing the envelope over the past 6 or 7 months. It has opened my eyes to the fact that the majority of women will do anything for what they perceive as the dominant male.

I have also started to understand social dynamics a bit better: I can see when people are trying to force me into a beta position. In the past I might not have caught it. I am cool and laidback and I wasn't really quick on the uptake, so to speak.

And this has been my realization: Men these days really aren't totally pussies at heart like they seem. They have merely been brainwashed into thinking this is the way to be.²²⁴

"CHANGING FOR MYSELF" (26 SEPTEMBER 2004)

Someone wrote† that for a woman to change herself for the guy would be to diminish herself, etc, and it struck me that that was how I'd always thought about myself. In the course of the frequent and tiresome rows with my husband I would ask myself angrily, "Why can't he just accept me as I am, why does he want to change me?"

And then I discovered this site, and was disconcerted and excited by what I'd found. I realised that my husband and I had been playing at

* "The alpha male and masculine power," 23 April 2004.

† See:
<<https://web.archive.org/web/20150111062814/http://www.takeninhand.com/the.resistant.woman#comment-2006>>

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having a Taken In Hand relationship for years, and I also realised that the times I had felt happiest was when, just occasionally, it had actually felt real. I also realised that my husband didn't really want me to change much, just minor things, and that it might not be the end of the world if I gave it a go.

I began to wonder if changing myself, just a bit, to make my husband happier, might actually make me happier too. Perhaps it would be better than continuing to have rows about the same things we'd been rowing about for 22 years. What if I just tried it and saw whether it worked or not? So I tried it, and found to my amazement that it did seem to work.

I found that it was actually more pleasurable to do what my husband wanted me to do than to argue with him about it. Not only did it make me feel calmer and happier, it was also incredibly sexy. I find it amazingly perverse that I, a rampant individualist who has always utterly loathed being told what to do by anybody, should actually like this, but I do. I find it quite easy (most of the time) to do what he tells me. And this makes it a lot easier for him to keep his temper too.

I don't feel at all diminished by having changed myself just a bit to accommodate my husband's needs, in fact I feel enhanced, happier and more peaceful. I don't want any more traumatising rows and shattering emotional experiences, I want peace, and I seem, on the whole, to have got it.

Last night we were listening to the couple next door having a stupen-
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dous row (a fairly frequent occurrence). They were going at it hammer and tongs and my husband said thoughtfully, "Maybe I should offer him the use of my workshop." I don't think being Taken In Hand is for everyone, and I don't know if it's for the woman next door, but it does seem, rather strangely, to be for me.²²⁵

"WHAT WOMEN DON'T WANT" (28 SEPTEMBER 2004)

I've met guys who try to pull the "I'm an alpha male" stunt. I can see right through it—it's a joke. I agree with various posters on this site that women hate a wuss but what do I mean by that? If you're a guy that's been reading books or websites telling men how to be an alpha male, I'll bet your idea of what's a wuss is different than mine. Let me tell you a story: it might enlighten you.

A few years ago, I met a guy who was so kind and loving I fell in love with him. It didn't matter that he wasn't obviously dominant. He did seem strong. I rejoiced in his strength! Here was a guy that was unafraid to express his feelings. He melted my heart by giving me a gift that showed he'd noticed something about me as an individual—not flowers and chocolates but something that meant something to me personally.

But after a while, the loving compliments and kindness stopped. He started swaggering around being a caricature of a "dominant" man. He became kinda defensive and expected me to pay for my meal when

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he took me to dinner. I could tell he'd been reading a book or website for men that he was trying to follow—and he even admitted it!

He was no longer natural. It felt so FAKE! and the fact that he was following some idiotic advice from a book made it feel like he was real insecure. I could tell some of the changes was because he was in love with me and scared of being hurt but that didn't make it easier or less painful.

I'm a woman that likes give and take. If a guy asks me out to dinner then expects me to pay for my dinner, trust me, that's not going to impress me. Young insecure guys who've been reading websites and books about being "dominant" will now be thinking "sponger". I've got news for you guys—I'm not. If I invite you to dinner, am I going to give you a bill for your half at the end of it? I don't *think* so. I also like to buy a guy gifts, and do acts of kindness for the guy, too—it's a two-way street, not all one way.

That guy made me feel unloved even though I knew he loved me! It felt like I wasn't special enough to him to be kind to anymore. When we were in line for the theater and all the couples ahead of us in the queue paid together and the guys doing the paying didn't look like they resented doing so, and then we get to the window and my guy pays for himself then I pay for myself, it hurt. I could see the couple behind us looking at us, and it hurt.

When a guy wants us each to pay our "fair share" for everything, it doesn't feel good. It makes you feel like it's not a relationship, it's two

separate people being sure to keep it that way.

That guy thought I wouldn't respect him if he paid for the dinner or movie he'd invited me out for. In fact, what I didn't respect was his lack of generosity of spirit. What I didn't respect was his insecurity, his weakness, his meanness. What I didn't respect was that he did not feel good enough about himself as he truly was—kind and loving—and that he tried to become something he wasn't. It made me feel sad, and the money issue made me feel like there was distance between us. The comparisons with other men I know—men who have the strength and security not to be penny-pinching and mean, men who are kind in their strength—became too glaring and I ended the relationship with him.

Now I'm with a guy that has never let me pay for anything except when I've been the one doing the inviting. That doesn't mean he's spent way more than the other guy and that I've been taking advantage of him—I've done more for this guy than I ever did for any guy before, and I love to buy him gifts and treat him to a full body massage often. He says he feels pampered, and I feel pampered by him too. We've been together over a year now. He's definitely not a wuss!

What is wuss behavior? A guy that's desperate, a guy who's sure he's not good enough, a guy that sacrifices what he wants for you in an attempt to curry favor, a guy that's indecisive and apologetic, a guy that doesn't have any steel in his personality. Most of all, a guy that

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plays the pity card. That's what being a wuss is, not acts of kindness, paying for dinner, buying little gifts.

There's websites and books out there telling men women want a dominant man (true) but those that tell men that courtesy and kindness and a bit of give and take are wuss behavior are doing those men a disservice. I hope this site is not one of them.²²⁶

"BROUGHT TO SUBMISSION" (30 SEPTEMBER 2004)

When a woman has settled for a man who is not quite strong enough to dominate her, she accommodates his lack of strength by making it possible for him to be stronger than her.

A strong woman does not submit; she is *brought* to submission. She doesn't lie down; she is swept up. A strong woman does not yield nor defer to a strong man. A strong woman is able to flex her strength without fear of overpowering her truly stronger man.

Such a woman is the rock of strength that a true leading man can lean on. When she is moved to his will or molded to his desire, it is because of his strength, not because of her lack of strength. With such a woman, and only with such a woman, a strong man can release his strength. She can feel his true power.

In those moments when my strong woman and I are alone, we share our strength with each other. She is bent to my will and becomes the object of my passion.

If anyone outside our relationship were to see us at those moments, they might think she was being abused, but she isn't. Those moments are her most serene, when she is able to revel in the pleasures of womanhood.

The name of this web site says it all. It isn't "Putting myself in his hands", it's "*Taken in Hand*".²²⁷

"STRENGTH AND CEDING CONTROL" (7 OCTOBER 2004)

Over the years, I've developed images of who I am. Some I have discarded, realising they bore little resemblance to the truth. Some I have kept, as they still seem to fit. Some I have tried to discard, only to find that they sneak back without me noticing. My upbringing has meant I'm by-and-large self-reliant and self-contained, and any suggestions that I may actually *need* (rather than just want or like) other people in my life used to often be met with a sharp retort. Submission did not seem to make up any part of my nature—I was intelligent, strong willed and stubborn.

Then along came my husband. I continued being "myself", and for a time he let me get my own way. After a while, though, we started experimenting with dominance and submission games as part of sex, and it opened my eyes. I have always had fantasies about being taken by some-one who was that much stronger than I—so no matter what I said or did I wasn't going to "win". But I've always ignored them—they've seemed wrong, shameful

somehow. But I discovered it really did something for me, and after a while that scared me. My husband backed off, but we had awoken something that wasn't about to go back to sleep again.

It was a while before we really looked at that side of things again, and when we did, it started creeping back into our sex lives. Again, I started to feel scared about losing control, but there was something else too. This time, it felt like something was missing. Nervous, I explored the web, and gradually came to terms with the fact I wanted my husband to be head of household, and to take me in hand properly. It took a while for me to get the courage to tell him—I was partly afraid he'd react badly, partly scared he'd agree immediately, and also partly afraid I was becoming weak.

Since doing that I've discovered that submitting to him could be a real test of strength and commitment on my part. I realised that it was easier to fight to get my way than to swallow my pride and accept what he wanted. I also discovered that being brought to submission was, well, decidedly hot.

Far more recently, I've realised that submitting more to husband has taught me how to channel my own strength to better effect than previously. At work, as well as being known as someone who is not scared of anyone, I'm now also seen as a calm centre when everything else goes pear shaped. I've discovered I can present myself well at interviews. And I've discovered that it's actually OK to show weaknesses occasionally.²²⁸

"IN DEFENCE OF BRATS EVERYWHERE!" (11 OCTOBER 2004)

I thought I should step up to the plate and defend the Brat name. I have seen quite a few negative references to brats on this site, lines such as, "I would not be attracted to a brat" and "I am not a brat..." It seems that being a brat is kind of like having some contagious disease or something. Who would not love to have a brat at their side? What is not to love about brats?! It seems like saying, "Not like I could love a slob" or "I could never love an animal lover."

I am trying to imagine my life without being a brat. I guess I am a self proclaimed brat and have been since before we embarked on this Taken in Hand road we travel now. Well I must admit that I am new to calling myself a brat, but brat I have been all along!

Brats are fun! Brats are fun to be around. Brats have that evil twinkle in their eye, as they very innocently pinch their loved ones' butts as they walk by. Brats know all the tricks to earn themselves fun spankings. Who could resist a brat who sticks their tongue out at them across the room at a fancy party? All in fun when no one is looking of course! They know exactly what to say to earn that "zing"! Come on you all know the zing, the perfect come back. The zing that makes your spouses eyes widen in complete amazement that you actually had the nerve to say what you said! It makes them speechless it was so perfectly timed!

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Then the fun comes in chasing you around the room to give you the perfect spanking your earned!

If you are a brat or love one there is nothing to be ashamed of! Brats are lovable! Brats make the head of their household glad to be alive. They make them smile at all the right times, even if the smile is there especially because they get to do what they love to do... spank their brats! Brats shake their bottoms at their husbands and dare them to do something about it! And speaking of dares, brats cannot resist them. The "look" is of course just an invitation, a dare, to try something again. The look means you are on the right track if you are trying to "earn" a spanking. The look means, "I dare you sweetie to try that again!" Any self respecting brat must of course try it again! Please, someone might think we had lost our touch if we didn't!

Brats are never mean or do things in bad spirit. Everything is meant in fun, in the spirit of a good time. Do we sometimes judge wrong and make a foul blunder? Of course, just like a comedian can misjudge her audience! But we take our lumps if we cross the line and all things are righted again, ready for another fun day! So if you are a brat, stand up unashamed and be counted. There are those of us who strive to be better brats and there are those out there who love the challenge of handling a good brat! Can you handle one? I dare you to try... :-)²²⁹

"TAKING HER IN HAND IS NOT A CONTACT SPORT" (12 OCTOBER 2004)

Taking a girl in hand is not about spanking (spanking's for kids) or discipline (let's face it, that's play-acting) and nor is it about whipping, paddling, or cropping (I pride myself on not needing any props). It's not about violence at all (I'm as civilized as the next ten thousand guys and don't understand some guys' desire to beat their wives up). It's a primarily psychological thing.

I don't believe in using violence to settle a dispute. No real man does that. You can call it spanking or discipline or taking her in hand but no civilized guy would use violence in that way—not if you mean real violence that is non-consensual. A real man can solve problems without resorting to blows. A real man uses words not a whip to settle a dispute. A real man can persuade using reasoned argument expressed without rancor. How does a whip get an argument across? You can't express much except displeasure with a whip.

I believe there are two types of leadership: authoritarian leaders, and natural leaders. Natural leaders have authority without having to force the issue using implements, violence, and/or threats. Natural leaders command respect without effort. Authoritarian leaders resort to using violence (spanking, whipping, paddling) using the fact that they are bigger and stronger than the girl to make her comply. Is that the kind of guy you want?

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I'm not opposed to violence where it's a consensual part of the sexual act. I like to challenge boundaries and very violently too with a girl that can take it and wants that, but I'd never do that with most girls because most couldn't handle it or have no interest in it. I'm not going to raise my hand to a girl unless I know it's what she wants. But using violence to settle a dispute is to me a cowardly way out of a difficult situation in which reason should prevail. Taking her in hand is not a contact sport it's about natural leadership. A natural leader doesn't need to put a girl over his knee or mete out any other forms of "discipline".²³⁰

"ALPHA MALE DOMINANCE" (17 OCTOBER 2004)

When a man wants to be dominated or spanked, the reaction of many Taken In Hand women is revulsion. It is not that they think that there is anything wrong with such a man, it is merely a visceral turn-off for them. It jars with the dominant alpha male idea. In a related discussion on the Taken In Hand forum mjbbjm wrote:

"Alpha male?" What's that? A man who never needs correction? He does not exist.

It's not that an alpha male never makes mistakes, because everybody does that. It just means that he's strictly masculine and dominant, and never submissive. Certainly not towards his woman, anyway; not to any sexual partners. He might have

to "submit" to his boss at work or whatever, but that's not at all the same thing as being sexually submissive.

In a Taken In Hand relationship, spanking and other means of physical force are not about "correction" but rather about dominance. That is, it's about *might*—not *right*. A man doesn't have to be right in order to dominate a woman; and if she's right and he's wrong about something, that does not mean that she's dominating him. I might get into a reasoned debate with my dominant man and win, for example; and if he has any integrity as a man then I'd expect him to be willing to admit it when he's proven wrong. But he still has the sheer masculine strength to overpower me in any physical contest—and to me, that's what the dominance aspect is all about.

Any man who wants to be spanked has a submissive streak, whether he's ready to admit it or not; and that most Taken In Hand women are looking for a purely dominant man, and will run as fast as possible in the opposite direction if they get the idea that the man they love has a submissive side. I would submit *only* to a dominant man, not a "switch", not even a man who's "mostly" dominant but occasionally likes to submit. Nope. Only a dominant alpha male. I don't want even the tiniest bit of submissiveness in a man that I could love and respect. (By way of contrast, it would not bother me at all to find out that he had some bisexual experience or tendencies—provided that he was always on the dominant side of that.)

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I'm not saying that you should not enjoy switching, if that's your thing. But if you expect to get a Taken In Hand woman to switch, don't be surprised if she finds the idea totally repulsive. And I also don't see how such men expect to get much joy from this website, either, since it is about relationships in which the man is totally dominant.

It is sometimes argued that a man could get a submissive woman to spank him, and it would still be male dominance because she is doing it because he has *ordered* her to do it. I don't buy it. You could also lie down on the floor and order someone to walk all over you; but nobody in their right mind would regard that as anything but a submissive desire on your part.²³¹

"WHAT TAKEN IN HAND IS, AND WHAT IT IS NOT" (18 OCTOBER 2004)

The Taken In Hand site is focused primarily on the underlying psychology of happy marriage in which the husband wears the trousers—to his wife's delight. For those with Taken In Hand inclinations the husband being in charge is exciting, erotic and fun. That is, *for those with Taken In Hand inclinations*: if this isn't your cup of tea, Taken In Hand is definitely not for you.

What is Taken In Hand about?

It's about...

- Love
- Marriage
- Becoming and being all you want to be
- Passion

- Amazing communication
- These relationships are deeply connected, engaged and intimate
- Great relationships
- Concentrated focus
- Sexual exclusivity
- Relationships that last forever
- Married for life
- Wholehearted relationships
- You and me—ordinary people
- Women wanting their man to be in charge
- The psychology of control
- Many Taken In Hand women need to be conquered
- Masculine power
- Men wearing the trousers/pants in the relationship
- The man has the balance of power
- The man puts the relationship and his wife first
- Men seeking/in Taken In Hand relationships ACTIVELY control
- Strong women making a free choice
- Strong, competent, high dominance alpha women who are not submissive—they don't have the D/s submissive need to serve and obey—but who are nevertheless lovely people, not domineering misandrist termagants
- A deep feeling of peacefulness
- A powerful erotic connection
- Acceptance
- Appreciating the one you love
- Being brought to submission—that's your cup of tea and not otherwise
- Being head of the household because it is fun, fascinating and highly erotic for both of you, as opposed to as a duty or a right
- Being sensitive to each other's needs and wishes
- Cherishing one another in a relationship
- Civilised gentlemen
- Consensual non-consent

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- Dignity
- Dynamic, evolving relationships, not static, stereotypical ones
- Exploring your deepest desires
- Feeling appreciated, accepted and admired
- Feeling intensely alive
- Flourishing, blossoming, evolving, personal growth
- Fun
- Hardcore high intensity challenging interactions
- Harmony
- Having courage
- Honouring those you love and yourself
- Improving relationships
- Improving your relationship
- Individuality
- Intimacy
- Joy
- Kindness in a relationship
- Learning from your mistakes
- Living a rich, vibrant, fulfilling life
- Maintaining a non-defensive spirit
- Maintaining control because that's what both spouses want
- Men enjoying feeling powerful with women who find that sexy too
- Men who are delightfully protective
- Men who cherish the one they love
- Mutual support in a relationship
- Being mastered; mastery if that appeals
- Openness and honesty in a relationship
- Ownership and being owned
- Possession and being possessed, for the sheer eroticism of it
- Pride
- Problems seem easier to solve
- Questioning assumptions
- Reconnecting and remaining connected
- Resolving disagreements quickly, creatively and positively
- Reverence (reverent relationships)
- Solving problems
- Strength
- Support
- Taken In Hand feels liberating
- Taken In Hand feels right
- Taken In Hand philosophy
- The Taken In Hand relationship is wholeheartedly *consensual* and for the delight of both spouses. Although the husband is firmly in control, the marriage is very much a *joint* endeavour. We see it as an exciting, fascinating and fun adventure
- Taken In Hand relationships come in many varieties
- Taking action
- Taming, being tamed—because it is fun and exciting, not because the woman is a shrew
- Tenderness
- The psychology of the man in a Taken In Hand relationship
- The psychology of the woman in a Taken In Hand relationship
- Thinking
- Treating each other with respect
- Women often feel powerful and free when taken in hand

What Taken In Hand is not about:

Taken In Hand is not about abuse, wife-beating or battering, bullying, non-consensual violence, or men being domineering, and if you think you may be in an abusive relationship, seek help immediately.

Taken In Hand is *not* about men being self-serving narcissists who passively sit around expecting their wife to act submissive and selflessly serve their endless needs and obey without question their demands no matter how immoral, repugnant or hurtful the demands may be. In fact, having power over their wives, hus-

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bands in Taken In Hand relationships take great care to put their wife and relationship first.

Taken In Hand is *not* about immature, thoughtless, self-absorbed drama queens who behave appallingly badly, fail to take responsibility for their own actions, and expect their husband to selflessly serve their endless needs and cure their personality defects and other problems. In fact, women in Taken In Hand relationships take responsibility for their own actions.

Taken In Hand does not assume the women are out of control emotionally or that the men are paragons of all known virtues. In fact, Taken In Hand recognizes the reality that individuals, whatever their sex, have strengths, weaknesses, virtues and faults, areas in which they think rationally and other areas plagued by irrationality. The control in a Taken In Hand relationship is nothing to do with one spouse being better, stronger, more rational and more competent, or the other being faulty, deficient, or more irrational.

Taken In Hand is *not* about “Doms and subs”. In fact, Taken In Hand women tend *not* to describe themselves as “submissive”, despite the fact that their husband’s control makes them melt. And most men in these relationships are more likely to describe themselves as being in charge, or wearing the trousers/pants, than being “dominant”.

Taken In Hand is *not* about stereotypical behaviour or fixed roles that prevent the flourishing of either husband or wife. Whilst we all, as individuals, have our own ideas and preferences, Taken In Hand is *not*

about one size fits all. There is no recipe for a Taken In Hand relationship. They come in many different varieties, and evolve in many different ways.

Taken In Hand is *not* about the denial of women's rights, or any wish to return to the Dark Ages or indeed, the 1950s (though some Taken In Hand folk find that idea erotic as fantasy!).

Women drawn to Taken In Hand relationships want a relationship with a down-to-earth, decent, dependable good man who wants to be in charge in his relationship but feels no need to act the swaggering “Dom”, knowing that real control in a fully committed marriage to a Taken In Hand inclined woman is ultimately far more erotic. Taken In Hand women do *not* expect their husbands to be superhuman, they want a real relationship with a real person.

Men drawn to Taken In Hand relationships want a relationship with a full human being who has a mind, ideas and wishes, and who does not diminish herself or lose herself in a relationship. They want a real woman, not an imaginary docile mindless yes-woman. In fact, many men say they positively revel in the challenge of being married to and in charge of a competent, strong, take-charge woman with a mind of her own, who is therefore a bit of a challenge. Some say that being married to a woman whom they have *brought to obedience* (taken in hand) is much more satisfying and erotic than being with one who was compliant or submissive from the outset so never needed to be taken in hand.

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Taken In Hand is *not* about casual sex, harems, or uncommitted relationships, it is about fully committed, permanent, sexually exclusive, faithful, emotionally and practically invested, happy marriages—for those who prefer that.

Taken In Hand women do *not* diminish or lose themselves in the relationship. In fact, many report feeling *more* themselves, more creative, more productive, more able to do what they want to do and more able to make progress in their lives

Taken In Hand is *not* about women being told they need to be more submissive, and you will not see many instances of women being accused of “topping from the bottom” on this site. Whilst such posts may be appropriate on some sites, they are not appropriate here, because Taken In Hand does not advocate submissiveness—kindness, considerateness, behaving decently, yes of course, but self-sacrificially serving and obeying? No. The Taken In Hand relationship is wholeheartedly *consensual* and for the delight of both spouses. Although the husband is firmly in control, the marriage is very much a *joint* endeavour. We see it as an exciting, fascinating and fun adventure.

Taken In Hand is *not* about spanking, or having a discipline or punishment fetish, and despite complaints that the site is thus focused, many or even most Taken In Hand relationships involve no spanking, ‘discipline’ or ‘punishment’.

Taken In Hand is *not* about intolerance for others’ choices in life. Not

sharing others’ preferences is not the same as disapproving of them.

Taken In Hand is *not* about any particular politics (there are Taken In Hand people in all parts of the political spectrum, from the most libertarian to the most conservative) or religion (there are Taken In Hand Christians, Jews, Buddhists, pagans, Wiccans, agnostics and atheists, etc.); and Taken In Hand is *not* about being anti-feminist or indeed pro-feminist.²³²

“SEDUCTION OF THE INDEPENDENT FEMALE” (19 OCTOBER 2004)

Men sometimes ask how to initiate a Taken In Hand relationship with their girlfriend or wife. I am a woman over 40 and a feminist. I have a doctoral degree and own my own consulting firm. I am the sole breadwinner in my family and I have been married over 20 years.

Our relationship had long been in place and I was clearly more comfortable in any realm where I had control. Intimacy was a distant memory. Deep inside I wanted to be taken in hand and was terrified to admit that this superwoman, super mom wanted nothing more than to be submissive. How could I admit that at home I wanted to give up control? I wanted my husband to lead me. I wanted to feel like a woman again and not some efficient money-making machine. I was the one who finally proposed the exchange of power, and I will never regret it.

I have given the issue of how a man with a wife like me could initi-

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ate this concept, test the waters to see what happens, and slowly over the course of several months, assert himself into the role of head of the household. If approached slowly and with love, I believe that a woman will come around. If she doesn't, then certainly a more direct approach right off the bat would probably have backfired big time.

Of course there is risk to pushing, even gently. You could scare her further away. Generally speaking, in a long-term relationship, where love and commitment already exist and a hasty exit without discussion would be unlikely, I would say, move ever forward. Don't give up. Don't backslide. Don't be bullied into your old role. You are taming the shrew, and you must assume she wants to be tamed. Assert control and increase your charm in increments. If you are wrong, she will never give an inch, she will fight you all the way. After months of trying and making no progress, you may need to re-evaluate. You could then put your cards on the table and see what happens.

I am no expert but I believe this approach is worth a try. These are just one woman's suggestions to inspire you. You know your wife or girlfriend best. Use that knowledge to adapt these ideas for her as the individual she is. What would work in one case might be disastrous in another case.

General Rules

Occasionally call her your bride when referring to her in front of others (even if she objects: the term

implies pride in her beauty as well as some possessiveness).

When at a restaurant, ask what she wants, and then when the waiter comes over, immediately order for her and then yourself.

Always hold her hand in public. Always! This is not optional. Do not let her pull her hand away. If she attempts to walk away, squeeze her hand and gently pull her back to your side. Lean over and whisper in her ear asking her why she needs to leave you. Make her tell you. Then smile, kiss her cheek, and let her hand go. If the excuse is nothing more than a way to get you to let go of her hand, tell her she can do that later and continue to hold her hand. She is unlikely to cause a scene. As she stands there livid, she realizes you literally have the upper hand. She doesn't want to create a scene in public, and you won't let go. She has no choice but to do as you say. Each time this happens, you show her your strength and power over her.

Anticipated response: "Don't ever do that again."

Reply: "I just love having you near me." Keep doing it. You may have to take her hand, because she will be unlikely to offer it. Once again, if you do this when others are present, she will hopefully feel too awkward, to refuse. If she pulls away, say quite loudly, "Now honey, don't be that way" and quickly take her hand. *Don't* let go. You have to be willing to be forceful in this regard even if it may cause others to stare. They will simply think it is a lover's quarrel when they see you are smiling and looking on her with love and she is pouting. You can't let

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what others think prevent you from proceeding. She may have a higher tolerance for making a scene than you do. Outlast her.

Always open car doors for her.

Anticipated response: "You don't need to do that. I don't like it."

Reply: "Oh, but I do." Smile, end of conversation.

Anticipated response: She rushes to the car door before you and opens it herself.

Reply: Open the car door again. Unlock her seat belt. Readjust it so that it fits her snugly making sure to give her breasts a stroke with the back of your knuckles as you do so. Then kiss her on the cheek and say, "Just want you safe, my love." This is much more intrusive and intimate than the door being opened, so may result in her allowing you to open the car door in the future to avoid this. Other women watching will find it tender and romantic.

Whenever your efforts to initiate intercourse are rejected, get dressed and leave the house for at least a couple of hours. If she asks where you are going, just respond almost as if you are excited about it, "Out for a drive. You get some sleep. Sweet dreams." Kiss her on the forehead before you go. The goal is to give her room to doubt her hold on you or at least on your lovemaking. Could you be seeing someone who won't deny you? Is she at risk of losing you? Simply plant this seed by allowing for the possibility in her mind. At some point, you might even stay out all night. (You can sleep in your office). Then if she questions you, simply state, "You were so tired; I didn't think you'd

even notice I was gone. I couldn't sleep so I went to the office to catch up on some work." This should be true by the way. A nervous woman is more likely to take risks in opening herself up to intimacy and abandoning some control.

Never give in to temper tantrums. When she gets bitchy, ignore her completely. If she has PMS, however, pour her a glass of water, hand her two Midol PMS pills, and say, "I love you even when you're all PMSy." Then ask her if she'd like some cuddle time. Honor her request.

Initial Steps: No Positive Response Needed from Her

Note left in wallet, "You drive me wild."

Tell her to close her eyes while you tell her a dream you "had" about her that was sexy and sweet.

If she is in her later 30s to early 50s, tease her often about hitting her sexual peek. Tell her it is obvious that she is hitting it because men can sense it. If you leave town, tell her you may have to get her a chastity belt because you don't want any other men sniffing around while you're gone. [Your assumption that other men would and should be attracted to her will be very flattering, even if she does not appear flattered.]

When you catch her about to wake up, position yourself so that it is obvious that you were admiring her body while she slept. Then when she notices, kiss her on the lips and hip and say: "Good Morning you unbelievably sexy woman, you."

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When you are in public and get separated talking to different people, make sure she catches you looking at her with interest and a smile as if you can't stop thinking about her. Periodically cross the room and as you put your arm around her waist, slide it up so that your hand is under her arm and your fingers are actually along the side of her breast for a moment. Not enough for anyone to notice, but enough for her to realize you just touched her breast in public. Then whisper in her ear before you walk away again, "You look so sexy in that dress."

Develop the fine art of winking. Wink at her from across the room. Wink at her across the table during a meal out. The wink is an unspoken intimacy and it is very flattering to the recipient. Let other women see you wink at her. They will tell her how lucky she is to have a husband who is so attentive, always holding her hand, opening her car door, putting his arm around her, calling her his bride, etc. The more that others tell her she is lucky, the more she will have to think about the fact that the other husbands don't seem to do this for their wives.

Anything you can do to make her blush, even if it is in front of strangers (not people she knows.) At the mall, at a restaurant, etc., you can say to the clerk or server, this is my bride of xx years, isn't she absolutely beautiful?" They will of course say yes. Start out by doing this with older women who will find you charming. Then try it with a male, but change the question to, "Aren't I a lucky man." As a member of the brotherhood of men, un-

less he still has pimples, he will say, "Yes sir, you certainly are." You have now elicited a compliment from an unknown male and she has heard it. Is he just saying that to be polite, or does he think it for real? What a total rush for your wife. Even if she protests, your goal has been accomplished, and you can say, "I can't help myself." It may have been a long time since she thought of herself as a prize.

Make a reservation at a charming bed and breakfast within a short driving distance. On a Saturday afternoon, when you know your calendars are clear, tell her you need her to accompany you on a commonplace errand. Have a bag packed for her in the car trunk. No pyjamas necessary, you simply forgot to pack them. (A toothbrush, cosmetics, medication, change of clothes.) Then drive her to the hotel and check in. Each time she asks, tell her it is a surprise. When you arrive, tell her she needed a mini vacation. Then stroll along a small town and browse antique shops, or something she would enjoy that you would ordinarily hate doing. Be a really good sport about it. Have reservations someplace quiet and romantic for dinner. When you get in bed, tell her how much you love her and you enjoyed spending the day with her. You know how tired she is, so if she wakes up in the night and wants you to make love to her, simply kiss you awake. Whether or not there is intimacy this night is her call. This is her vacation. Your goal is to show her that it is not just about sex, but also about enjoying time together.

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Intermediate Stage: Playing with Fire

When watching TV, sit next to her on the couch. As soon as she says she's tired and turning in, say, "Come kiss me good night after you brush your teeth." This gives her time to brush her teeth, wash her face, put on her pyjamas, etc. Then when she comes back out, pick her up and carry her to bed. If she doesn't come kiss you goodnight, go into the bedroom.

Once she is in bed, tuck the covers all around her. Kiss her gently on the forehead. Say, "I love you. Sweet dreams my darling." Then leave her alone. While she sleeps, take a permanent marker and write your name just above her pubic area. When she throws a fit in the morning, feign innocence: "What a sweet thing for you to do. Honey, that must be just about the nicest gifts any man could ever receive. You are full of surprises." Then kiss her. Do not respond to questions. Do not respond to anger.

Every woman has to bend over to pick up newspapers, junk on the floor, toys, things she dropped. Regardless of whether it is true or not, simply for the sake of this exercise, she must believe that you honestly assume that each time you catch her doing this she is trying to sexually entice you. When you catch her bending over, say: "You know that drives me crazy when you bend over like that. In fact, I suspect you do it on purpose just for that reason."

Anticipated response: "I do not."

Reply: "You can't fool me, you little tease."

The next time you catch her in the position, say, "I knew it. There you go again. Driving me crazy bending over like that. Next time you do that, I'm going to assume it's an invitation."

Anticipated response: "It is not."

Reply: "Then you best not be bending over around me anymore."

Then the next time you see her bending over, assume it is an invitation. Make a sexual sound like a growl, slap her on the rear, pick her up and carry her to the bedroom.

Anticipated response: "Stop it. Let me go right now."

Reply: "Not until you apologize."

Anticipated response: "For what?"

Reply: "For taunting me with your sweet ass again. Repeat after me, 'I'm sorry for tempting you with my sweet ass again.'"" Don't let her up until she says it. Then say, "Apology accepted, but only this once."

Then the next time, take it one step further in bed. Don't let her up until she let's you kiss her breasts, etc. Each time it goes a bit further. This should be very playful in your tone.

Situate yourself spread eagle behind her on the floor or on the bed, and wrap your legs around hers and your arms around her as well. "I want you to rest your head back on me and describe a sexual fantasy or make believe story."

Anticipated response: "I don't have any." Or "Absolutely not. Let me go."

Reply: Wrap your legs and arms around tighter and don't let go. "You don't leave until you tell me a sexy story. You have a great imagination. No excuses."

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Anticipated response: Silence or "No."

Reply: "If you had to write a sexy romance novel would the theme be: pirate/captive, patient/doctor, school girl/professor? Pick one. Now tell me what is your lovely heroine's name? [Insert her name?] How did she meet her rogue, [insert your name]? Does she resist him initially? How does he win her over? Does he do this?" Start touching her breasts. If there is no resistance, continue the questioning, "What about this?" Touch her elsewhere; continue the pattern.

Anticipated response: Stop It.

Reply: Then tell me the story.

Anticipated response: She tells one and really tries.

Reply: "Why you little vixen you! I can't believe you think of naughty things like that." Then let her go.

Anticipated response: She tells one but makes no effort, and willfully makes it boring or ends poorly, like the heroine slaps the rogue and leaves the country never to be seen again.

Reply: "We need to work on your story telling skills. We'll practice again soon. I'll give you an example. Make her the lovely innocent and you the rogue. She is kidnapped by you and taken from her father because he was enraptured by her beauty. He is a bit rough around the edges, but never hurts her. Nevertheless, he feels free to have his way with her whenever he wishes, and will only pull her back into the bed, and spank her bottom, if she attempts to get away. Otherwise he is very gentle. Over time she realizes that he loves her. But she resists en-

joying his touch, she tries to hide the redness in her face when she sees him staring at her bare body. Then he suddenly disappears without a word, leaving her stranded in his home/boat/castle with no clothes, no way out, but plenty of food. For a week she waits, alone, feeling abandoned, realizing that she actually misses him, even aches for his touch. Then he returns carrying a wardrobe filled with beautiful dresses and jewelry he has chosen just for her. She falls into his arms and he carries her to the bed, and they live happily ever after.

[Note: As ridiculous as this sounds, there must be some reason millions of women read this story line over and over again in romance novels. This is exactly what you are trying to accomplish.]

When you finish the story, you say, "So the rogue, while not perfect, treasures his sweet little captive. And with lots of patience and lots of love, he finally awakened in her the desire she had long suppressed." [Meaning, she does not lack passion or a sex drive. She is simply suppressing it. And your evil plot is to unlock the box.]

While she is sitting on the couch or in a chair, walk up from behind her, encircle your hand around a large amount of hair and hold it. Then tell her you are going to brush her hair.

Anticipated response: "Stop it."

Reply: If she attempts to move away, hang on to the hair that you had initially placed in your hand. As long as it is a handful of hair and not a few strands, it shouldn't hurt her, but it will keep her in the seat. "Oh no you don't. I've wanted to do this

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a long time, and you're going to sit there while I enjoy myself. Go ahead and watch your TV show and don't mind me." Then when finished, lift her hair and kiss her on the back of the neck, and whisper, "Now that wasn't so bad, was it."

Anticipated response: "Yes it was."

Reply: "Then I obviously need more practice."

If she has a ratty t-shirt or something she wears to bed that you hate, throw it away. When she questions if you know where it is, play dumb. If she has no sleepwear that satisfies you, one day when she is out, take all of the pajamas out of her closet and hide them in a box in the garage. When she notices, tell her that you were tired of her wearing clothes to bed that hid her beautiful body, so she can sleep nude or she is free to purchase from among the items you have selected for her online. Then show her what you have chosen for her from VictoriaSecret.com or similar site. You can place it in a cart so she can review the items and choose with you.

Anticipated response: That night she shows up for bed in another baggy T-shirt. Smile at her wryly and wait until she goes to sleep. Then with a flashlight so you can see what you are doing, carefully cut the t-shirt from top to bottom (front or back—it doesn't matter). When she wakes up, she'll get the idea. Her options were nude or your choice. Repeat this until she breaks down and chooses to order from your selection.

While at dinner at a restaurant, where she can't easily get away, describe for her an erotic dream that includes spanking for a real reason, followed by intense love and loyalty. Make the example one where she had risked her safety (no seat belt, driving while drinking, etc.) Then tell her it feels good to have a woman you can not only dream about but you can share your dreams with.

At this stage, whenever she gets a bit surly or bossy, give her a playful swat (not a caress) on the bottom, and say, "Careful, you don't want a real spanking, or do you?" This should be repeated many times. Whenever she objects, tell her that she brought it on herself by doing whatever it was she wasn't suppose to do.

Advanced Stage: Intimacy

When she is out of the house, remove locks from all bedroom doors so she can't lock you out or find a place to sleep where she can keep you at bay. It is fine to leave locks on the bathrooms doors. If she chooses to sleep in the bathroom all night, she probably will only pull that stunt once.

Each time she seems to be resistant to intimacy, you must give a show of strength and assert your will. Grab her arms, and while kissing her forcefully, move her arms behind her back, and hold them there. This should in no way hurt her, but is intended to make clear that with your superior strength, you could easily force her if you chose to do so. Then after a long hard kiss. Look into her eyes, and let her go, and walk away saying absolutely nothing.

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ing. Ignore anything she may say that is negative and walk away, responding only with a triumphant smile. You are calm. She is flustered or angry. You have won that round.

Plan a date night and that morning before going to work, set out the outfit you want her to wear. Tell her to have it on when it is time to go out. because that particular outfit emphasizes her beautiful (breasts, legs, rear end, or such). Don't ask her. Tell her.

Anticipated response: She isn't dressed in the outfit you chose.

Reply: "You're not dressed. Shall you go change into the outfit I chose for you or would you prefer that I dress you?"

Anticipated response: She objects and refuses.

Reply: Repeat your statement looking directly into her eyes without anger but with authority in your voice, "Will you go change into the outfit I chose or would you prefer that I dress you?"

Anticipated response: She still refuses.

Reply: If she really wanted to go on the date, tell her you are disappointed she doesn't want to go and proceed to fix a sandwich from the fridge. If she won't be disappointed by your canceling the date, then tell her that you assume her refusal to change herself, means she wants you to dress her. Then reach to begin undressing her.

Anticipated response: She literally dodges you.

Reply: Do not chase her or force it. Stay in place and remain calm. Stare at her then tell her that her decision will have consequences. Refuse to

explain further. If she didn't really want to go, take her out anyway. If she now refuses to go, or really wanted to go, don't take her. The next time she is out of the house, remove all of her clothing and place it in a closet to which you have installed a lock and have the only key. Remember to pull any of her dirty clothes out of the laundry room too. When she realizes she has no clothes, explain that from now on, you will be picking her clothes every day since she seems unable to compromise with a simple request for a date night. Then she only gets clothes that day if she must go to work or attend a critical meeting. When she agrees to wear what you like for date nights, give her back only the clothes that you like and those that she must wear for work.

At some point when you are taking her somewhere that she really wants to go, and where you are very unlikely to run into anyone either of you know, ask her to wear a short sleeved shirt with fabric that stretches. When she comes out ready to go, walk up to her and tell her that there is one more thing you need to do first, then through her shirt, unhook her bra. Reach up one sleeve and pull down the strap below her elbow and over her hand. Then proceed with the other strap. Then if her shirt is untucked, reach up under her shirt and pull the bra off removing it from under her shirt. If the shirt is tucked in, reach down the front of her shirt and pull the bra out of one sleeve, then the other. Then lay the bra to the side and tell her that now you're ready to go out with me. Keep one hand on her lower back to

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keep her from backing away from you.

Anticipated response: "What do you think you are doing? Stop. I can't go out without a bra on!"

Reply: "Okay then, we won't go."

Anticipated response: "Fine then, I'll go without you."

Reply: "I don't think so." Hold up both sets of car keys. Without the keys, she has to choose whether to go braless or not go at all.

When you hear her in the shower, wait until you believe she is just about done, then step into the shower with her.

Anticipated response: She stays.

Reply: Kiss her and touch her breasts; you know the rest. Tell her she looks unbelievably sexy when she is wet. If there is any intimacy permitted at all, after the shower, you get a towel for her and start to hand it to her. Then you say, "Wait a minute. Not so fast." Then you dry her off. First wrap the towel around her and kiss her while the towel soaks up most of the moisture and then pat dry her entire body paying close attention to her pubic area and breasts and bottom. Finish by saying, "All done, would you like me to add some lotion?" Even if she says no, as you walk away, say, "Well then, anytime I can be of assistance, just let me know. I'm always happy to help."

Anticipated response: The second you get in the shower, she bolts out of the shower.

Reply: Snicker loudly as if mocking her modesty.

Rent and watch really romantic movies in the dark together. During the movie, wait on her. Get her wa-

ter, a bowl of grapes, etc. Hand her tissues if she cries and tell her you love that she has such a romantic heart. Give her a foot massage while she watches the movie. During the movie, make it obvious you are watching her as much as you are watching the movie. After the movie, tell her you'll clean up while she gets ready for bed. When you get in bed, kiss her neck, ears, lips. Whisper to her that you love her. Then make love to her.

Anticipated response: Any word that comes out of her mouth should be met with your index finger over her lips and a soft "Shhhhhhh. I'm making love to my lovely wife tonight so don't interrupt me."

At some point when she has violated your instructions after having been cautioned before that there would be consequences next time, take her hand. Look her in the eyes. Tell her, "I told you there would be consequences." Pull her over your knee, and slap her on the bottom 2 or 3 times. Announce that this was just a small demonstration of what happens when she disobeys. Help her stand up, and keep a firm hold on her. Look her in the eyes, and tell her, "I love you. You are the most precious thing in the world to me and so is our relationship. I have waited far too long to take you in hand. Things will be different around here. Make no mistake. I will tan your backside if you don't start showing me some respect around here. Are we clear?"²³³

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"HOW MY HUSBAND TOOK MY CLOTHING CHOICES IN HAND" (19 OCTOBER 2004)

I have always paid a certain amount of attention to what my husband likes in the way of clothing, and these days I pay more, but he didn't force me to do this. Before we went on holiday this year, for instance, he told me he wanted me to get a new swimsuit, because the one I had "makes you look too matronly," he said. I think he meant it made me look fat, but even my husband, though not normally given to being tactful, knows how dangerous it is to suggest a woman looks fat.

Well, I said he could choose the suit he wanted for me, and he chose a plain turquoise one which was not the one I had my eye on. When I tried it on however, I realised that he had chosen better for me than I would have for myself, and that the plain one suited me better than the more flamboyant one I would have chosen.

It occurred to me that this was a perfect microcosm of how a Taken In Hand relationship is supposed to work. He didn't ignore my tastes and wishes, he chose a suit in a colour he knew I liked, and he didn't pick one out in too revealing a style, which he knew I wouldn't be comfortable with. He considered my tastes, but he made the final decision. In other words, I trusted his judgement, and it worked.

I was rather thrilled about this. But the point is it was by mutual consent. He didn't use steamroller tactics. You need to think about what your partner wants as well as what

you want. You might cut up her dress and then find it's one she really loved. Women don't get over that sort of thing easily. You don't need an instruction manual to tell you how to have a relationship, you need to find out for yourselves what works for you.²³⁴

"DOMINANCE, INTEGRITY AND NEEDING TO FEEL SUPERIOR" (19 OCTOBER 2004)

I don't think a man can be truly dominant without integrity. Not that integrity is only a masculine characteristic, of course; I would say that a woman also needs integrity to be truly feminine. Integrity is an essential feature of being a whole, mature human.

There are so many men who posture at being dominant, while inside they are really quite insecure. And when a man thinks that his dominance depends on him being "right" and making his woman "wrong" then I'd say it's just his insecurity coming out, which manifests itself as a lack of honesty and integrity. But if a man realizes that he doesn't have to be perfect in order to take the dominant lead in a romantic relationship, that he doesn't have to be right all the time; then he can act out of the inner strength of integrity, and not try to pretend to be something that he's not, just in order to appear dominant. This is what many, many self-proclaimed "Doms" just don't seem to understand: that the more they huff and puff and put on airs of being all-wise and all-important and all-powerful, the more weak and insecure and

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unmanly they will appear to perceptive submissive women.

I guess the bottom line is that a man is either dominant or he's not; and pretending just doesn't cut it. First he has to be a whole, mature, responsible, honest, human being. Then he also has to be in touch with his own masculine strength and power, and enjoy being a strong man, and be comfortable in using that power when appropriate. Then he has to have some understanding of women, both as human beings very much like him, and also as feminine beings who are profoundly unlike him. He needs to be able to respect women, including the deep feminine desire to surrender to a dominant man. Any man who thinks that a woman's submission to a man somehow makes her "less" than him is utterly clueless about women, if you ask me. When he can respect her for her feminine surrender just as much as he respects himself for his masculine dominance, then the magic of romance can be kindled.

But when a man is not truly dominant, and is insecure with himself as a man or even as a worthy human being, then the issue of his dominance will always leave a fearful nagging question in the back of his mind: "By what right do I justifiably dominate this woman?" And then he'll try to justify his dominance with irrelevant reasons. Like: he's "wiser" than she is, so that makes it ok. Or, she's somehow a lesser human being whom he can dominate without feeling guilty. ("Virgin/whore" complex, much?) He tends to feel that his dominance can

only be established or justified on the basis of his perceived "superiority" in some particular quality. And if that "superiority" does not in fact exist, well, he'll just have to pretend that it does, and hope he can fool some woman into believing him.

But a truly dominant man realizes that both he and his woman are fully adult human beings, intelligent and mature, and equally worthy of respect. Then his dominance is justified on the grounds that: (1) his sheer masculine strength gives him the power to conquer and coerce her, in a way that she would not be able to do to him; (2) both of them find that fact deeply erotic and thrilling, and it enhances their romantic love for each other. That's what I mean when I speak of the dominant alpha male.

I'll also add that when a man finds his masculine dominance fulfilled within a romantic relationship, then I think he's less likely to go around trying to push his dominance in areas where it really doesn't belong. (That is, aggressively trying to be the alpha male at work, in politics, in social groups, etc.) Not that he won't still have a healthy competitive streak; but just that he won't feel his manhood is on the line every time his boss chews him out over something petty. That is, male dominance within a romantic relationship can enhance his sense of pride and comfort in his own manhood; but it cannot give that to a man who doesn't even have any in the first place.²³⁵

"OUR NEW BEGINNING" (20 OCTOBER 2004)

My wife and I have been married for about thirteen years. At times our marriage was a happy one. However, several times infidelity on her part was evident. I, a forgiving person, continually forgave her. But, as time went on each incident became more damaging than the first. Towards the end I found that my wife no longer respected me. She saw me as a weak scourge or henpecked. We divorced and I moved on.

A year later we began dating again and remarried. We have been back together now for about five years. This time around has been great. We have spoken about me being more lovingly dominant and firm with her. She claimed that she loves a man to be dominant and yet she resents him for it. In short she did not know what she really wanted. We did have had several major incidents and we have toyed with the use of punitive force in the past but never seriously.

Well now I am in my 40s and she in her 30s a change of demeanor seems to have occurred. Today I was at work and angry with her over the usual power struggles between us. I never try to be controlling, I try to value her freedom of choice and ideas. But lately things have become bizarre to say the least. However, being at work and being upset, I realized that I would be no good to my boss. I asked for the afternoon off. My intent was to come home and speak to my wife and try to gain

a mutual understanding. When I arrived home she was in our room and on the internet. Upon seeing me she quickly shut down the computer and we began to address what was bothering me.

Suddenly all the hurt and anger from her infidelity seemed to creep out in our conversation. Don't get me wrong—I by no means used the past to make her feel bad or guilty. But I started to see the hurt in her eyes. I walked out on the balcony to have a smoke.

To my surprise my wife gently approached me softly and submissively without any anger in her voice. She grabbed me by my hand and led me into our front room. At this point I only thought she wanted to continue to talk. I sat down on our couch and I expected her to sit next to me. But instead she went and locked the front door and closed the drapes, then approached me, asking me to spank her for thirteen years of guilt that she has been feeling. I did not know how to handle this. I once asked her to submit to this in the past but she refused, and I never brought the subject up again. So at first, I was a bit reluctant, but she encouraged me and assured me that I was in control. So I spanked her soundly.

Afterwards, she wrapped her arms around me and asked if I forgive her. She said that she wants to spend the rest of her life with me. I know that it was hard for her to submit to such a thing. My wife is a strong-willed woman and at times can be arrogant. The love that I felt for her after I spanked her was overwhelming. It seemed that all the hurt and

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anger between us went away. We further were able to discuss things between us that in the past we were unable to. I know that my wife will continue to have a strong will and that is ok with me. But she is committed to trying to change our lives to allow me to lead, nurture, and protect her. And I *will* be in control.²³⁶

"DOMINANCE AND FORCEFULNESS, AND VIOLENCE" (20 OCTOBER 2004)

In a relationship based on male dominance, the man will probably have the woman's blanket consent (good terminology, BTW) to use physical force to control her. In that case, he does not need to get her consent each and every time he does that; he can assume that it still holds even if she is protesting vociferously at the moment. Indeed, something like that sort of blanket consent is necessary if the man's dominance is to be maintained as a serious and permanent state of affairs, and not just a fun game that happens for a few minutes during a play session.

Is this violence? I think most of us don't consider it violence as long as the woman is consenting to this type of relationship, and as long as the man doesn't cause her any real harm—that is, no lasting physical injuries. But I don't think you can have this sort of relationship without incurring a few temporary bumps and bruises—and that is precisely what would make it "violent" in certain politically correct circles, and maybe even in most people's view. Like so many things, it comes

down to a question of how we choose to use language.

It's interesting that the dictionary gives rather different shades of meaning to the words "violent" and "violence." Here are some meanings of "violent": Marked by, acting with, or resulting from great force; extreme, and/or marked by intensity; moving or acting with physical strength; urged or impelled with force; excited by strong feeling or passion; forcible; vehement, impetuous, fierce, furious, severe. Hmmm, most of that sounds to me like it's quite applicable to a Taken In Hand relationship, i.e., masculine dominance and feminine surrender. It's all about passionate, forceful intensity, which seems like a *good* thing to me.

But here's some of what they say about "violence": Physical force exerted for the purpose of violating, damaging, or abusing: "crimes of violence"; abusive or unjust exercise of power; assault, injury or abuse; transgression or oppression. Hmm, well that doesn't sound too good at all, does it? That's not about passion at all, but about injury, damage, and abuse. There is some overlap between the two definitions, and I've exaggerated the differences here, to make a point. But the question is, why should there be any difference at all, between "violent" and "violence"—which are just the adjective form and the noun form of the same concept?

I'm not sure, but I'm guessing that it might have something to do with the last few decades of activism against "domestic violence." There can be some very real problems with

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men who do actual injury to women, of course. But it seems to me that many feminist advocates who have condemned all forms of "violence against women" are deliberately trying to blur the lines between acts that are merely intense and forceful, and those that do serious physical harm. In their view, a man who merely pushes his wife up against a wall without hurting her, or who just restrains her while she's having a tantrum, is committing "violence" against her, merely by using physical force. And by that measure, "violence against women" becomes a problem of epic proportions, requiring police departments to intervene in the most petty domestic disputes, and government agencies to hold training sessions to deprogram men out of their violent impulses.

If these were courses in anger management that teach men to punch a pillow instead of their wife, that would be a very good thing; such courses have proven their effectiveness. But in many cases, these programs follow a radical feminist agenda of teaching that any form of male domination is wrong; and that the husband must not only refrain from injuring his wife, but must also refrain from trying to assume any sort of leadership role in the relationship. (I kid you not; I've looked at a number of sites that explain this strategy. From their view, all evils are a result of male dominance.)

Consensual relationships based on male dominance (including the man's ability to enforce his dominance via his greater strength) can be a wonderful thing for many men and women, but the common per-

ceptions of "violence" make it difficult for many people to see this. The word "violence" is often inappropriately applied.

For example, let's say a woman plays on a soccer team and comes home all bruised and banged-up, following a hard-won victory on the field. I'll bet the radical feminists—and the public at large—would have nothing but cheers and accolades for her. But if a woman were to incur the same exact injuries—minor and temporary as they are—at the hands of her dominant husband, there would be a huge cry of outrage. Why? In both cases, the situation has the woman's total consent: she's there to have precisely this sort of experience, and she's there because she chose that. In both cases, the injuries are minor and temporary; no lasting harm will come of them. (In this example; obviously both soccer and husbands do have the potential to do real injury.) In both cases, the lifestyle she's chosen is important to her; but I think we can safely say that for most women their marriage would be much more important than any sports team. The only reason society approves of the first case and strongly disapproves of the second case is that they refuse to acknowledge that male dominance can be a good thing, and that many women will enter happily and willingly into that sort of relationship. Those assumptions need to be challenged.²³⁷

**"ASSERTING DOMINANCE PHYSICALLY
FORCEFULLY" (21 OCTOBER 2004)**

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Spanking is not the only means for a man to demonstrate forceful physical dominance over a woman. It may be more "safe" and less likely to be viewed as abuse than other means just because parents often spank children but it was never my favorite thing. Here are some other forceful tactics that a man can use to assert dominance over his woman:

1. Walk right up to her (it helps if the man is tall enough to tower over her) and then keep walking, so that she is forced to keep backing up; he can back her all the way up into a wall and then hold her there, just by pressing against her with the bulk of his body. (Although he might need to put his arms against the wall, too, so she can't slip out.) If he is much bigger than she is, this is a very intimidating tactic.

2. If he's really mad and wants to demonstrate his dominance without hurting her, he can smack the wall with the flat of his hand. She will feel the force of his blow reverberating through the wall as she's pressed up against it; and if he hits it hard, this will certainly impress her with his masculine forcefulness. Or to be even edgier, he can hit the wall with his fist—but this will probably damage either the wall or his fist, depending on what the walls are made of. (Good idea to figure that out first; because hurting your own fist is not exactly a good way to demonstrate your dominance.) In either case, he should not strike too close to her head, because if she moves a bit then he could hurt her badly. It's enough to hit the wall in the general vicinity; the point is to impress and frighten

her, not to terrify her so badly that she wants to flee for her life.

3. Or instead of backing her into a wall, he can grab her and force her against his body—hold her wrists behind her with one hand, and with the other hand crush her gently against his manly chest. Again, if he is a big man and strongly built, this cannot help but impress her with his physical power, and make her feel fragile and helpless by comparison. If a man is pressing your face into his chest, it's hard not to be intimidated. Even just the act of holding both her wrists in one of his big, strong hands while she struggles to free herself (provided he can actually do that), will impress her and tend to bring out her submissive side.

4. Or the man can take her by the wrists, and then drag her over to the sofa. He can sit down and force her to kneel between his legs while he still holds her wrists, and then take her head by the hair and make her look up at him. With her head at that level, it's an excellent position from which he can remind her once again who's boss. (He could also reach for his zipper and assert his dominance in another way; but he'd better know how to deal with a biter before he tries that.)

5. Or he can just pick her up and carry her into the bedroom, and toss her on the bed; then he can get right on top of her and pin her down as she struggles. Again, if he can pin both her wrists with one hand, then he can use the other hand for intimidation tactics; either grab her head and read her the riot act, or maybe even punch the pillow by the side of

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her head, to express his power and assert his dominance.

Anyway, the point in all of these scenarios is for the man to use his physical strength to intimidate the woman into submission, without actually hurting her. If she is sexually submissive, she will probably find herself simultaneously feeling heart-pounding fear and deep sexual desire as she is forced to surrender to him.

For couples who have some experience in the martial arts—judo, karate, wrestling, etc.—there will be plenty of other creative ways for the man to physically assert his dominance without actually hurting his woman. (I once had a karate teacher who did this so effectively that I had to quit the class because I just couldn't deal appropriately with the intense erotic stimulation as it occurred in that setting; my submission instinct would kick in, and I would just turn to jello in this man's hands. But I suspect he was doing that intentionally, because it was never a problem in other karate classes I took.)

But here it becomes important not only that the man is bigger and stronger than the woman, but also that he's more skilled in the martial arts than she is. (Or at least equally skilled, so that his strength still gives him an overwhelming advantage.) If so, then this can be a very hot way to get into physical dominance. It might sound dangerous to those who have never done martial arts; and indeed, it could be if the man is ignorant of what he's doing. But good martial artists know how to pull a punch, and how to toss or

hold somebody without injury; so it can actually be much safer to get manhandled by a black belt than by some guy who hasn't got a clue. Also, when sparring you can put on heavy foam pads so you can still feel the blows, without really getting injured. But this is a situation where the woman really needs to assess how much she can trust the man, in terms of both his intentions and his expertise.

Anyway—not that I've got anything against spanking, but there are plenty of other ways for a man to physically assert his dominance over his woman. Some women may like this sort of harmless “bullying”; I certainly know that I do. But then, it's probably not everybody's cup of tea, either.²³⁸

“FORCE OF WILL” (22 OCTOBER 2004)

Many women are happy for the man to use physical force to control them, but for me this is not what works. There have been a few times in our marriage when my husband has used his physical strength to overpower me, and these occasions only caused me anger and distress; I didn't find it pleasurable at all.

What I find attractive and exciting is being brought to a state of submission by my husband using the power of his will rather than his physical strength. If he were to grab me and spank me forcibly when I was in a temper or sulking or something, it just wouldn't work—I need to be brought out of the temper first. That he can do this is something I've only recently discovered, and it has greatly enhanced our relationship.

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Since he has started giving me much more serious spankings than I've ever had before, I find myself sometimes thinking I just really can't bear any more. On the first occasion he spanked me like this, I struggled off his knee about halfway through and said, "I can't take any more, I just can't!"

"Yes, you can," he replied, with this new authoritative manner that I find unbelievably sexy; and he very gently but firmly pushed me back over his knee, but he used only minimal physical pressure. It was the authoritative voice that hit me right in the libido and made me go back there and stay there (more or less). If he'd just used brute force to keep me there, which he quite easily could, it would just have left me shaken and upset. It's the mental rather than the physical forcefulness that is the turn-on for me. I've always known he's physically stronger than I; it's finding that he's capable of dominating me with the strength of his personality that has been the big turn-on for me.²³⁹

"CAN TWO DOMINANT INDIVIDUALS HAVE A GOOD RELATIONSHIP?" (22 OCTOBER 2004)

In her article "Who says you have to be submissive?"* the boss said that she is more drawn to the idea of a D/d (dominant-dominant) relationship than to a D/s (dominant-submissive) one. She argued that wanting a dominant man does not

necessarily mean having to suppress any dominant tendencies you may have.

I mean by "persona" a set of habitual patterns of behavior (where others would call it "personality" — but we all have more than one persona). We all have dominant and submissive personas to use when appropriate, whatever our primary persona.

But we also have an emotional core (sub-conscious) that produces our emotions. And the emotional core qualities (while fixed in each person) can be anywhere from strong dominant thru almost neutral to strong submissive. And there usually is tension between our persona traits and our emotional core qualities.

Those who are naturally submissive (emotional core) sometimes have primary dominant personas and adapt to it. So, in my opinion, whether a dominant-dominant relationship would work at all (assuming one party is naturally dominant) depends on whether the other party is naturally submissive with a strong dominant persona.

I can't see how two strong naturally dominant individuals could get satisfaction from an intimate relationship. Friends, maybe.²⁴⁰

"WHICH COMES FIRST? DOMINANCE OR SUBMISSION?" (23 OCTOBER 2004)

Some readers may have noticed that I rarely write about dominance and submission. Instead, I might say *that a couple knows what needs to be done* or equivalent wording.

* "Who says you have to be submissive?" 15 July 2004.

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The reason that I do not write about dominance and submission is that I am coming from a different point of view from some writers on *Taken In Hand* in that I write about families and children—which are central to the purpose of men and women forming unions.

Thus, to me, the question *which comes first—dominance (control) or submission*—becomes a chicken and egg argument. It does not much matter which comes first. Women tend to be drawn to men whom they know will meeting their needs by being a good provider and father to her children. (That is, in fact, the definition offered for middle dominance* women—who comprise most of the female population.)

Conversely, those who come from the high dominance perspective can be (not necessarily are) a challenge. In return for their respect, these women expect a man to go one better. Consequently, a man might have to prove his superior dominance to such a woman before she will submit to him.

On the other hand—as described in articles such as “Our new beginning,”† “How I became submissive,”‡ and “In praise of Fascinating Womanhood”§—more conventional women might become submissive in

order to achieve (for them, at least) a *higher* end.

To complete the triangle, a low dominance woman may need to be drawn out of her shell so that her fear becomes respect. She might need to be spanked because she is loved and, for all of her initial terror, needs to know that she is important to the man she married. Regardless of dominance level, most women understand a man laying a firm hand on their backside much better than his walking out and leaving her. Furthermore, regardless of his faults, women come to appreciate the committed man as she becomes older.

The most likely scenario for a typical couple is that there are two parallel tracks on which successful relationships run—not unlike a railroad. When the relationship bends one way or the other—as in a curve—the weight of the relationship may shift more heavily on one rail or the other. Even on a straight run, the train (relationship) may sway more to one rail or the other and back again in a rocking motion.

At the same time, it must be realized that women can and do test men as part of their innate survival mechanism. Women do give implicit permissions on which the expect men to act. In time, if men fail to act, women will despise them.

Simultaneously, most women—as well as the relationship they are in—would benefit from being taken in hand physically (soundly spanked) on occasion. Otherwise, women acquire the “mark of the beast” in that they acquire metaphorical horns and become combative.

* “Women want men who are more dominant,” (9 September 2004)

† “Our new beginning,” 10 October 2004.

‡ “How I became submissive,” 1 April 2004.

§ “In praise of Fascinating Womanhood,” 25 October 2003.

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In time, neglected women can become evil—doing great damage to their husbands, their children, their families, and themselves. Some become politically correct fanatics!

When all is said and done, whether submission or dominance comes first probably depends on the type of relationship as well as the individuals in it. Some women can be quite subservient. Others require a looser rein.

To try to impose a singular, absolutist style on all would be sheer folly. It is its own brand of political correctness.²⁴¹

"HAPPY LIVING IN FEAR OF A MAN?!" (25 OCTOBER 2004)

Who in her right mind would be happy living in fear of her man? You'd have to be crazy to want to be afraid of your husband, wouldn't you? So why do some women actively want to feel a little trepidation around the man they love?

The short answer is that for the Taken In Hand woman such fear can be erotic. It can make her exquisitely and delightfully aware of the authority and control her man has over her. Living under the control of a man may be the last thing some women would want, and we can argue about the amount and type of control we are talking about, here, but ultimately, that is what the Taken In Hand woman wants; and for such women, a touch of fear and

trepidation adds an exciting, sexy, even thrilling *frisson* to life.*

The sort of fear I am talking about is not the fear of the battered wife but *welcome* fear—fear that the particular individual at that particular time enjoys. As I have explained before, a non-jaded horror movie buff would enjoy feeling scared when he watches a film like *The Ring* or *Halloween*. Similarly, an experienced public speaker might enjoy the nervous trepidation she feels before she begins to speak to a large and potentially hostile audience. A child might love the terrifyingly long, dark and curvy tunnel slide at her local water park—and might be disappointed if the fair-ground "Ghost Train" ride turns out to be less scary that she had hoped it would be.†

In his 1903 book, *Sex and Character*, Otto Weininger wrote:

Woman is essentially a Phallus worshipper ... permeated with a fear

* It should be obvious that the sort of fear I am talking about here is nothing like that of the battered woman living in fear of her husband. Nor am I making the argument that battered women enjoy being abused. And I am certainly not suggesting that women living in fear should keep a stiff upper lip and grit their teeth and "be strong" in the face of their fear. That sort of fear is wholly bad.

† Others would be so terrified that they wet their knickers—and at the other end of the scale, some would not feel fear of any kind in these situations. I am not saying that all women (or even most!) would enjoy feeling a little afraid of their husbands. This piece is about those who do, for those who do. Everyone else, please ignore it!

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like that of a bird for a snake... It has never until now been made so clear where the bondage of women lies; it is in the sovereign, all too welcome power wielded over them by the Phallus.

This quote is powerfully erotic for many of those for whom it embodies a grain of truth. It alludes to the power of a dominant man to consensually and erotically control the woman who worships him. It highlights the fact that the man and the woman are *different* from one another, and it alludes to the fascination, the hint of fear, and the vulnerability that a woman in love can feel for her man.

When the Taken In Hand woman is with a man, she wants to be aware of the man as a man. She wants to be aware of his masculinity, his physical strength, and the fact that he is different from her. She wants to feel respectful towards him. Being aware of his authority, his power, and the control he has over her reminds her that he is not "one of the girls". He may well be her best friend, but he is not a buddy and she doesn't want just another platonic friendship with him. He is the man she loves and reveres, the man in charge, the man who can make her shake and quiver with a mere word or look.

Many a strong, high dominance resistant woman with a commanding presence and alpha tendencies, constantly fears that she might inadvertently overwhelm and control her man. When such a woman knows that the man is an autonomous person very much under his own control with real power and authority

he won't shrink from using to command respect from her, she can relax at last. The *welcome* fear has liberated her from the *unwelcome* fear. For the Taken In Hand woman, this is deeply relaxing, endlessly fascinating, and intensely erotic.²⁴²

"THE EROTIC POWER OF THE UNSHACKLED MAN" (30 OCTOBER 2004)

I have long thought that separating sex from the rest of life must logically tend to make the rest of life less sexy than it can be if you don't. Going through life energised by a *frisson* of sexual charge seems like a very sensible idea to me. So when I first read this —

I am not a crypto-submissive; I am dominant in sexual games, and my fantasies are as you would expect given that fact. However, I do think that there are other things in life than sexual fantasies, and I can tell the difference between reality and fantasy.

—I was struck by how profoundly I disagree! The idea that there is more to life than sexual fantasy is true only in a sense so obvious that it does not need to be stated. In another sense, it is completely untrue. In a Taken In Hand relationship, the couple's sexual connection is a unified, integral aspect of their lives together rather than being separated from the rest of life.

The fellow quoted above clearly sees the man's authority and dominant control as something to keep

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firmly locked in the bedroom—merely a sexual role-playing game having no significance in any wider sense. He sought to reassure the female reader that his authority is strictly fantasy only—that he is not a puritan but a “Dom”, and that in life in general, he believes firmly in equality. Indeed, who but a handful of misogynists, feminazis and frowny atavistic traditionalists would argue that men and women are unequal? Well, in the sense relevant here—couples freely choosing to be in a hot Taken In Hand “unequal” relationship in which the man has authority over the woman to her great joy—I would!

In her BDSM book, *Erotic Surrender: The Sensual Joys of Female Submission*, Claudia Varrin says something similar to the chap quoted above:

These playtime characteristics are just that—playtime, pretend, like a child's game to be put away when the mantle of adulthood and its responsibilities are again around your shoulders. Enjoy the playtime and pretend world you and your partner create for yourselves. ... Although it is sometimes tempting to blur the line between fantasy and reality, the distinction must always be made. (p. 16)

The trouble with locking the man's authority firmly in the bedroom toybox and only bringing it out at “playtime” is that there are never enough playtimes, and between them, the fun is given over to all these grave and weighty adult re-

sponsibilities. If a man's dominance is thrilling during playtime, hey, call me greedy but why limit it to playtime?! Why not bring a little excitement into the whole of life? If unshackled male authority can infuse even the most ordinary interactions and mundane tasks with sexual charge, why deny yourself that pleasure? Couples who have a good sexual connection are happier, healthier, more energetic, less likely to split up, more able to solve problems together, and *they are having more fun!*

So who is the puritan here? The Taken In Hand person for who welcomes and embraces male authority and dominance without lots of rules and limits—or the BDSM person who insists that it must be clearly labelled “fantasy”, that it is strictly for the designated playtime “scenes” only, and that it must be kept locked away otherwise? ;-) (My BDSM friends know that I am only teasing. To each his own. Forgive my little jest. The irony is just too delectable!)

Look at what Taken In Hand folk say about the effects of bringing male dominance out of the bedroom and into life in general. Do you see miserable, downtrodden women suffering under the weight of all that terrible unconstrained male authority? Men unable to cope with the freedom? Women wanting less male dominance in their lives? Or do

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you see women who are delighted?
Louise wrote:*

Since we started having a Taken In Hand relationship I have found that there is never an occasion when he wants sex when I don't feel like it too; I seem to be in a mild state of sexual arousal virtually all the time when he is around—it's fantastic. I really, really like feeling like this.

Race, who has been happily married for 30 years, says:†

Taken In Hand has played a very big part in the success that GT and I have had. Never has our communication been so alive, never has sex been so erotic and steamy, never have we had so much confidence—I could go on and on

And Stephen says:‡

The benefits have been profound. Even after five years we still behave like newlyweds. She feels secure and more feminine in knowing that I am in charge and I proudly, without shame or self-consciousness, am able to be true to my masculine nature. What a relief! I must also add that I have gained a loving and caring wife

who spoils me rotten. Who would've ever thought that something so seemingly simple could have such profound impact on our union?

Can you see why I so profoundly disagree with the statement I quoted at the beginning? Why separate your life into sexual and non-sexual bits, playtime and weighty serious stuff, exciting fantasy dominance and drab, boring authority-less reality, when you can have all this? Why not do as Taken In Hand couples do and allow the erotic power of unshackled male authority and real control to infuse the whole of life, making it brighter, more stimulating, a little more dangerous and a lot more fun?²⁴³

"EMBRACING MY INNER ADULT" (30 OCTOBER 2004)

After a childhood of sexual abuse, acrimony, fighting, and perversions in my home, and after years of working through it, thinking about it, not thinking about it, talking about it, and finally crying about it... I put my inner child to bed.

That poor, hurt, and ever-vigilant child needed a long rest. I embraced the grown up I had become through it all. Damn, it would be nice to heal that little girl, but I can't. It would be nice to make her dreams come true, but I never will. The best I can do is craft new dreams based on who I have become and what I want to be. Oh, I'd like to be better than I am, but to hell with it. I just am. I'm here, finally.

* See:

<<https://web.archive.org/web/20150423014008/http://www.takeninhand.com/alpha.male.dominance#-2318>>

† See:

<<https://web.archive.org/web/20150326031636/http://www.takeninhand.com/what.taken.in.hand.is.about.and.what.it.is.not.about#-1942>>

‡ "How I turned the fantasy into reality," 29 December 2003.

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My inner adult is aggressive, funny, acerbic and suspicious, tough, adventurous, and ever surprised by beauty. This world is not enough... there's not enough sky or beauty or music or love but that I want more and I'm determined to find it, wrest it from the ugly and cynical and store it all up as a treasure in my heart. The thrill of being alive and breathing and dwelling, comfortably for once, in my own body is too delicious to not be excited about.

After 25 adult years of trying to reconcile all *that* that was my childhood, and hoping my spouse would heal/help/guide/provide the impossible filling of that ache, I stepped up to difficult line of adulthood, and never looked back. What a relief, for him and me.

Yes, I'm the one who said there are no knights in shining armor.* How strange to find that I don't *need* one now. But damn if they don't look mighty sexy in all that strength and steel! Now, I *want* one!! For all the *right* reasons.

Besides, every warrior queen needs a worthy escort.²⁴⁴

"TAKEN IN HAND IS NOT A LIFESTYLE" (30 OCTOBER 2004)

Alternative labeling—such as “dominance” and “submissive”—only became necessary when men stopped acting like men and started trying to please women by becoming more feminine. Before the age of political correctness, it was generally

understood that men behaved one way and women another. When the two genders came together as a couple, they fit like parts of a puzzle to form a whole that was greater than the sum of their parts.

To be sure, there were always the Professor Higgins types about, wondering aloud why a woman could not be just like a man. Yet, when women tried to behave like men, they became more neutered than manly—a lot of bark without much bite.

Meanwhile, as men tried to behave the way that self-professed gentlemen thought that women wanted them to act, a strange thing happened. Instead of being more liked, they became less respected. The result, which more closely resembles a heap of jigsaw puzzle pieces, has been thoroughly confusing to men weaned on the pabulum of political correctness.

For millennia, women have sought out men able to protect them. That urge did not suddenly go away just because entrepreneurs began marketing electric lighting and sliced bread. In reality, at some point, most women want a man to behave like a man. Part of the expected behavior includes taking them in hand for an old-fashioned straightening out. It is part of the test of a mate's manhood about which women are, before the fact, seldom explicitly forthcoming. If he never does so—especially if the woman's needs are ignored—the woman will come to despise the man whom she once loved.

It is not that women relish pain and most certainly not cruelty. Rather it is that they respect strength—

* “There is no knight in shining armour,” 9 August 2004.

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especially when coupled with honor and honesty. Along with things such as diligence and thoughtfulness—the combination creates a man with whom a woman can form a lasting and fruitful bond that will withstand the ravages of time and the onslaught of events beyond their control.

Being taken in hand is not a *lifestyle*. It certainly is not an *alternative* lifestyle. Instead, it is a successful survival strategy that has withstood the test of time in both Eastern and Western cultures.²⁴⁵

“HE OWNS IT ALL...” (3 NOVEMBER 2004)

Some Taken In Hand posters react strongly against the idea of being owned: “He doesn’t own me....he is the head of the household,” said Lisa.* For me, it has taken some accepting, but Gary does indeed own me. That does not make him a tyrant, but it does mean pleasing him. But bear in mind that my comfort, needs and desires come almost before his demands.

For example, while he may demand a sexy piece of clothing, I can tell him what my needs are and he will relent. But if I am told “no panties,” there is no alternative.

I happen to take comfort in his ownership of me. The care and attention he provides equals only to his affection. I suppose it’s partly in

your mindset of what ownership means. While Gary could pick all the clothes in the world, if I nix it, it doesn’t happen. And if I tried on everything he wanted, but I was excited for one thing entirely different, I’d get it, because he wants me happy and he spoils me. So when he wants a push up bra because it’s Wednesday, no problem. Or as he is so fond of saying, “it doesn’t belong to you anyway, your breasts belong to me.”

But to please Gary I dress each year on my birthday as a prostitute and we go out on the town. Now I am the slut that he owns. And I can’t even begin to explain how I feed off his excitement. It works both ways.

I do just about anything to please him. And it does not interfere with any independence I may have. All dignity is intact, in fact reinforced. If he picked out my clothes would I wear them? Damn straight I would. And quite frankly, there is a hint of pride in being owned and loved so well...²⁴⁶

“OWNERSHIP AS BONDING” (3 NOVEMBER 2004)

The idea of ownership may be troubling because it conjures up notions of indelicacies such as slavery (chattel-like property) or the Stockholm Syndrome (identifying with one’s captor) as well as other forms of victimization.

In reality, ownership within the bounds of a monogamous relationship may be more wisely considered as an intense bonding in which two become one.

See:

* <https://web.archive.org/web/2014115111335/http://www.takeninhand.com/how.my.husband.took.my.clothing.choices.in.hand#comment-2272>>

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While I do not own my wife in any legal sense of the word, she knows that she belongs to me in an exclusive bonding. At the same time, there is no other woman in my life—and has not been for almost forty years.

Ask my wife if I own her and she might reply that I do. At the same time, she is quite aware that she possesses me as well.

Over the years, we have become something more than either of us could have been on our own.²⁴⁷

“BEAUTY IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER” (6 NOVEMBER 2004)

I have what some folk consider a rather unusual attraction to some women who appear unattractive to others. My most difficult task with such a woman is convincing her that she really turns me on. She is so hung up on negative past experiences that she actually *refuses* to believe that anyone could possibly be entranced by her image.

It's so pathetic that public perception of beauty is limited to the harsh and cold visage of the typical “Super Model”. I want a real woman, not a plastic display piece.

I know of a woman who had plastic surgery to conform herself to the most popular view of desirability. She was delighted with the result, as were many others of her acquaintance. Conversely, I was extremely disappointed with the change. Oh, did I say “disappointed”? That's rather mild, considering the fact I was livid with rage. I thought the

operation made her look absolutely hideous.

I think most men base their initial interactions with women on whom they consider most appealing. That sounds a bit shallow, but it is a fact of life. I think it's a fact that most women have learned to tolerate, whether they like it or not. For those who don't fit the popular mold of what is considered “sexy”, this can be a painful ordeal. They seem to think that since the majority of folk don't view them as beautiful, no one will.

This is an attitude that has caused me much anguish. A woman whom I consider hot has such low self-esteem regarding her appearance that she kills the mood of an intimate moment. Regardless of what I say or how I act, she presumes herself to be repulsive.

How dare she presume what I think! How dare she presume what turns me on! How dare she defy me!²⁴⁸

“WHAT WORKS FOR US” (6 NOVEMBER 2004)

My wife I and were high school sweethearts and tied the knot fresh out of school. We have had a very successful thirty-year marriage. We have three children ages 27 to 13, and our two older children have blessed us with three very beautiful grandchildren.

Almost a year ago, my beautiful wife, GT, asked me to take her in hand. Reading the Taken In Hand web site had helped GT come to terms with feelings that she had

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suppressed for 28 years. This site helped her realize that it was okay to crave the masculine-feminine dynamic that happens in a Taken In Hand relationship.

When my wife asked me to take her in hand, I was surprised to say the least. My natural dominance had been suppressed for all those years. But GT's request unleashed my natural dominance; and as the days passed I have, to my wife's delight, gradually stopped suppressing it, the effect being a tremendous positive effect in our relationship.

As my confidence grew and I began taking control, there was a total dynamic change in our life together. This is not to say that *poof*, overnight, all of a sudden, I had total control. It has taken months to get to the point we are now at in our relationship, and we still have a long way to go. We are fully aware of the tasks and the commitment it will take to raise the bar even higher in our relationship. That being said, we are excited by the journey and know we will get there.

So how does it work in practice, for us? We have found it best to have some ground rules. There are three things that I will not ever tolerate: disobedience, disrespect, and dishonesty. This is absolutely set in stone. My wife knows there will be consequences for any of these three things. Keep in mind that this is what GT wants: it is not that I am imposing a Taken In Hand relationship on her.

I have setup a variety of guidelines to give my wife a feeling of emotional protection and security. Here are a couple of examples: I ask her to

think of positive ways to do things in her everyday life, to buy herself a new set of clothes every month, and to wear thong underwear. This latter rule is a very effective way of reminding her of my presence and my dominance in our relationship. Besides, she looks very sexy in them!

I have made GT and our Taken in Hand relationship my total focus and passion. I consider this relationship an earned responsibility that has been given to me and I have vowed to surround my wife and this relationship with love, confidence, and leadership. So I have also set guidelines for myself these include: no disobedience, disrespect, or dishonesty. Never would I mentally or physically abuse my wife; I always keep my wife's health and wellbeing in mind; and never do I take her in hand physically without a reason or out of aggression.

Though it may seem on the surface that I am domineering or demanding of my wife, I am not, and nor do I micromanage her. However, I do have certain expectations, and my wife is fully aware of them and knows the consequences if she fails to meet them. But it is not all about spanking. Another way I express my dominance is with a look, whisper, or a touch. It is very easy for me to get my wife's attention this way while in public.

Although it may sound pompous and arrogant to some, this is how Taken in Hand works for us. I have surrounded my wife with passion and I have committed myself to her wants and needs by taking her in hand. In return I have earned her submission. Never has our commu-

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nication been so alive, never has sex been so erotic and steamy, never have we had so much confidence as we do now. Taken In Hand has had such a positive impact on my relationship with GT that I don't know why we didn't start it 28 years ago.

There have been other significant changes since GT¹ gave me her unconditional consent to take her in hand. For example: no longer do we argue—I don't remember the last time I raised my voice to her, and any time something controversial comes up we address it properly. I am not sure why Taken In Hand works, but it does!

I own my wife's heart, love and devotion both emotionally and physically, as she said.* I have taken GT in hand for these reasons: because she craves, wants, and needs it; because I want to support her, protect her and be there for her; and most of all—because *I love her!*²⁴⁹

"WHY WOULD ANYONE WANT TO BE CONTROLLED BY A MAN?" (7 NOVEMBER 2004)

In this day and age, if you're a woman, it seems you're not supposed to want your man to have any sort of control over you. If you do it implies, for some reason, that you're weak or misguided. That somehow wanting a dominant man automatically says that you can't stand up for yourself.

So one of the (minor) thrills I get when my husband takes me in hand is a little shiver of illicit pleasure. After all, what would any of my friends and relatives think—all of whom see me as a strong woman (well, that's what they've said)—if they knew my husband spanked me because I was being too bratty? Most of our immediate family know that my husband has taken on a more traditional role as head of household, but I don't think they realise what he meant when he told them!

It goes far deeper than that, though. I don't appear to be especially wired to get hooked on illicit pleasures in general—I'm too nervous of being found out!

There is the thrill of the fight in it for me at times—the struggle to not give in, be it a mental or physical struggle; and the thrill of being overcome both mentally and physically. There is something intensely arousing in being beaten (*not* in the abusive sense!) despite myself, although I suspect there has to be a strong connection there already. In other words, if someone who wasn't my husband did it, I might accord them more respect as a result, but would probably not be aroused. Although I may then have a need for my husband to do likewise to me!

Then there's power—definitely an aphrodisiac for me—at least when the man I love is wielding it over me! It's not just that he has an aura of dominance, it's also that he exudes sheer certainty that he's going to get what he wants (be it sex on demand or a cup of coffee...). I may put up some resistance (well, maybe not in the case of coffee), but we

* See:
<<https://web.archive.org/web/20130128031824/http://www.takeninhand.com/he.owns.it.all#comment-2464>>

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both know that he's going to get his way.

But—I don't think any of this would affect even slightly if I wasn't very, very aware of how much he loves me, and if I didn't love him back at least as much.²⁵⁰

"MONOGAMY" (11 NOVEMBER 2004)

The same person...the same face, the same body, the same lips, the same everything, from this day forward for the rest of your life.

Can you handle it?

According to some people, it's like hell on earth.

Never before in our history has monogamy been such an issue. Before the middle of the twentieth century, no one every talked about it—you were generally married for life and if you were a man, you had a discreet little bit on the side. If you were a woman, well what does a woman care about sex, anyway, as long as she has a nice shiny new Frigidaire? During the sexual revolution, relationships didn't even last as long as the party did, and then you were on to someone new whose name you never quite got. And then came the eighties. Just when you thought everyone was cool with the idea of casual relationships, along comes AIDS and terrifies everyone back into the safety of long term monogamy. In the aftermath of all this, people in the twenty-first century have grudgingly accepted that committed relationships are probably the healthiest, even if they relish the idea as much as they do vegetarian bacon or tofu pizza. Monogamy

may be good for us, but it doesn't mean we have to like it.

Is monogamy good for us? If you put any stock in studies undertaken by university scientists, you will find myriad examples of the benefits of marriage: 60% of single women reach the age of sixty-five, whereas 95% of married women do. Drug and alcohol abuse among 500 000 young test subjects dropped sharply among those who married. The University of Chicago recently conducted a study that showed married people make twice as much money, have twice as much sex and experience half the domestic violence as those who co-habit, and the numbers are likely even higher when compared to those who don't live together.

But none of these statistics ever to seem to impress the legions of people who run a mile from marriage and consider monogamy too close to "monotony" for their liking. For them, the sixties and seventies never ended. One taste of unfettered promiscuity and they're hooked, deadly diseases or not. These are the people who seek sanction for their philandering, and try to convince the rest of us that monogamy is unnatural, and ultimately unsustainable, and that we're all just kidding ourselves if we try to pretend otherwise.

One of their favourite arguments is that, as animals, it is our biological imperative to disseminate our DNA as widely as possible. We are driven, they maintain, to have sex with many, many partners in our lifetime so that we have the best odds of living on in the next generation.

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Most animals don't mate for life, they argue, and so neither should we.

The simplest answer to this argument, before even getting into the obvious benefits of monogamy, is to realize that human beings are animals in physical form only. We have the most advanced brains on the planet, and our ability to reason, form concepts, to *think*, is unique to us. No dolphin ever landed a man on the moon. No gorilla, no matter how skilled at sign language, ever wrote a novel or charted the human genome or built a skyscraper. There is nothing on earth like a human being, and therefore no comparisons to animals are valid, especially when it comes to something as complicated and ultimately brain-oriented as sex.

While animals mate out of instinct—and sometimes at their own peril, like the various spider and insect males who give their lives to the female after mating—no human being ever mates without engaging their mind on some level. We actively choose to mate or not to, to reproduce or not to, and in every case, we never merely pursue someone simply because they are of the opposite sex. We have sex for more than procreation, whereas animals, with extremely rare exceptions, mate only during their fertile phases and only for the purposes of creating offspring. We also continue to love and care for our children even after they're weaned, which animals don't. Humans and animals are more different than we are alike; arguing that we should be as indis-

criminately sexual as they are is ridiculous.

The only argument that's left, then, is that promiscuity is just more fun. It's too boring, opponents of monogamy say. It just isn't exciting enough, being with one person all the time. Some groups have even christened this lifestyle with an official sounding name—"polyamory"—referring to themselves as simply "poly" and maintaining, quite honestly, that they do not see the value in exclusive relationships and would rather carry on several meaningful, if transient, relationships at once. It's more fulfilling, they claim, sharing your life with several partners, never being truly intimate with anyone.

I might actually believe them, I might actually defer to them and acknowledge that while it doesn't work for me, it obviously does for them. I might...if it wasn't so painfully obvious that these people are having anything but fun, are anything but excited, and are exactly what they claim to be avoiding: bored out of their minds.

Promiscuous people are not happy. They are always looking for fulfillment around the corner, for excitement in the next encounter, for the bigger, the better, the more outrageous. They are never satisfied with what they have, but continue to strive toward something that is always out of reach. These people attempt to replace quantity with quality, growing tired with each new adventure and moving on, unsatisfied, to the next. Soon even the briefest of relationships aren't enough, then it must be a stranger. After strangers become boring, they

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decide *two* strangers, now that would be *really* exciting. But when that doesn't work, they have to reach lower and lower, degrade themselves even more, to find that next sexual thrill. When they aren't seeking newer and more outrageous adventures, they're busy running away from something—emotional problems, troubled pasts, flawed ideas about the validity of love... a happy and value-driven life. The inability to find and commit to someone wonderful is a serious character flaw, not a lifestyle that should be held up as a model of human behaviour.

People who claim to enjoy being “poly” must steel themselves against jealousy, an emotion that should, by rights, be a warning sign that they are doing something wrong. The fact that they feel it, or have to try desperately not to feel it when they have to share someone they care about with someone else, is probably the clearest indication there is that this lifestyle is not at all natural for human beings. The proof of this lies in the fact that if it came down to it, if they absolutely *had* to choose one person from their threesome or group to be with—just one—every single one of them would be able to make that choice. Everyone has a preference, even among people they care about. Everyone knows the *one* person they want to be with more than anyone else.

There's a loneliness that pervades those who simply flit from one person to the next, a sense that they are missing out on something profound and real. They know, deep down, that the height of love and the best

kind of sex is found within long term, mutually exclusive relationships. They know, or should know, that good sex depends on it.

And that's the bottom line when it comes to monogamy. Monogamy affords you the best sex of your life. If you understand, as I mentioned before, that sex for humans is as much about the mind as it is the body, then it makes perfect sense that the most fulfilling sex occurs within a mutually, loving, trusting relationship. Being with one person you love allows you a level of freedom and creativity that you can't possibly enjoy with strangers. The intimate bond you form with the person whose character you love as much as their body allows you to explore the dominant and submissive aspects of your natures, without worrying about political correctness or misunderstandings. It allows you to grow, to experiment, to savour each experience and relive it, in reality or in a shared memory. It removes you from the realm of jealousy or competitiveness, and lets you live instead in a safe haven of sexual pleasure and freedom.

It is the only kind of relationship that fosters primacy and privacy, the two most fundamental requirements of a satisfying, long term mutual love. When you slip into the arms of your only love, you know that you are welcome, desired, and that the tiny, subtle little things that give you the most pleasure are understood by your lover, and practiced with care.

With most casual relationships, sex is a special occasion. It is the ultimate goal of the relationship, yet the one thing that always eludes the

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players, who chase after it and connive ways to get it and who ultimately only get to enjoy it with relative infrequency. Monogamy provides you with an opportunity to enjoy sex every day of your life, in every way, infusing even your non-sexual moments with a tinge of excitement and expectation. Spontaneity is much easier when you're married to your lover—if the mood hits when you're retiling the kitchen, you can make love right then and there. You certainly don't have to plan for a Saturday night date and spend all evening wondering whether it's going to happen and how good it will be. You can kiss the back of your wife's neck while she's working, or caress your husband's penis while you're watching TV, neither of which necessarily lead to sex but which reinforce your sensual bond with each other and keep the proverbial romantic fires lit. There's just no replacing that kind of constant, enriching, loving sexuality, no matter how many new faces or bodies catch your eye.

Looking into the eyes of the person you admire most in the world only heightens the physical sensation of sex; looking into the eyes of a stranger only takes away from it. Your attitude towards monogamy makes you confront the question of which you want more.²⁵¹

"BEAUTY IS SKIN DEEP; SEXY IS FOREVER" (12 NOVEMBER 2004)

My sexuality has to do with what's up in my head. My freedom to think for myself, make all my own deci-

sions, be the powerful and sexy woman that turns a man on, is what counts. More and more it counts, as the body is less what I might want it to be (in terms of working properly and hurting—not in terms of meeting some stupid icon of a super-model).

My mind that ranges through all sorts of sexual fantasies and doesn't lower its eyes and mumble, "Yes, Sir," to some man... unless I damn well feel like it!

That's what's sexy.

My imagination that feeds a man's fantasies... and makes him so trusting of me that he will willingly give up his safeword to me... instead of the other way round ;-) ...that's where I'm sexy.

It's not about the face, it's not about the body, it's about what is ticking in the mind and what is happening in the heart. It's knowing that I hold the secret to *his* desire and I can make him sigh and moan and beg for more.

No man has to bestow the Cinderella gift on me of telling me I am beautiful. I know what I've got. Beauty is skin deep, and skin wrinkles. Sexy is forever.²⁵²

"HAVE YOU CAPTURED HER MIND?" (14 NOVEMBER 2004)

For years I have had all sorts of responses to my looks. I have had brutes who want to keep me for themselves. I have had weak minded men who need to find my most unattractive feature to empower themselves. But never once, had a

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man been able to take the most alive part of me and hold it in his hands.

My mind.

Then I met Gary.

Yes he was attracted to me. The whole me he sees. But it was my mind he captured. That part of me that sees him, the world and everything in between.

I stopped responding to touch years ago. But once Gary found the key to my locked mind, I was able to open, to bloom and prosper. Now my body can respond in kind to the images he kindles. And he feeds off my energy. My sexual energy because I like to take most things to their basic level. I excite him by my need to explore, taste, touch and pick up the scent. And he uses his voice to guide and control. Then his own masculine strength to create a need which he conquers. My body and face will linger and show the love in my heart. But it's my mind that grows, expands and lasts through the ages.²⁵³

"HOW CAN A STRONG WOMAN SIGNAL HER SUBMISSIVENESS?" (14 NOVEMBER 2004)

After several drinks with some theatre friends the other night, the conversation turned to dominance and submission within a relationship. Always fun. :-) (Now, I've never told any of those friends explicitly that I am seeking a Taken In Hand style relationship.) One guy went round the table, trying to pick whether each person was predominantly dominant or submissive in the bedroom. Pretty soon this be-

came a bit of a game and everyone did it.

I was shocked and surprised that out of ten people in the room, every single one of them picked me to be dominant! (Except for an ex of mine, who cracked up laughing.) Now, I know within myself that I'm not. The few friends and ex-boyfriends I've told know that I'm not. But the fact that a whole room of people that know me quite well thought that I was, got me to thinking—if this is the image of me that my friends have, what on earth are the men I'm meeting thinking of me?!

I do not fit the mould of a submissive woman. This I know. I keep my hair short because it's easy and it suits me. I wear funky, comfortable clothes (except when I go out, when it's funky and a bit sexier). My makeup is either non-existent or super-dramatic depending on my mood. I'm tall and broad-shouldered. I am extremely vivacious and social and have never had a problem talking to people about anything (and I'm a huge flirt!). And whilst I love getting dolled up and wearing stockings, skirts and heels, I'm also the first one to don jeans and pick up power tools when the need arises. I am feminine—both by definition (that I'm female) and by connotation, and I'm very happy with the fact that I'm a woman. I'm not trying to be one of the guys.

Please don't get me wrong—I can be girly (how I hate that term) but usually only when I'm playing. I have no respect for the women I meet who are really girly-girls because more often than not, they

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seem to be air-headed and useless and their presence completely counter-productive when you're trying to get something done. I just don't have it in me to giggle and bat my eyelids and have deep and meaningful conversations about manicures. I've never even had a manicure because it makes playing the guitar impossible!

Now, here's the crunch. I love the way I am. I'm proud of my body, my personality and my opinions. I love that I am strong and independent and can walk home alone at night (gasp!). I wouldn't want any of that to change. What I do want is a man who is stronger. But, god help me, I just can't seem to find them! Where are they? And how can I attract the type of guy I want without diluting myself?

Eric wrote a fascinating article* which gave me a little hope, but now I just don't know. All of the articles that I have read (and I thank each and every author for sharing their experiences) deals with Taken In Hand either within an existing relationship or in theory. I want to open the floor here and ask you all for some advice. How do I convey my submissiveness to a potential partner, when everybody seems to think the opposite? Keep in mind that I don't necessarily want to broadcast exactly what I do in the bedroom to guys I hardly know! And (specifically for the guys) would you date a gal you perceived to be more dominant, for the challenge in making her submit?²⁵⁴

"MISTAKES MADE IN FORMING RELATIONSHIPS" (17 NOVEMBER 2004)

One common mistake that women make is in expecting men to take the lead in establishing a relationship. While true to the ideal, these days passively taking what comes along often results in women wishing to be taken in hand all too often dating aggressive—even predatory—wolves rather than assertive men. Smooth talkers do not always make for good husbands or even decent friends!

A second mistake that women make is in trying to trade up in men. Having found one man capable of satisfying their needs, some women want to find someone better. Since the grass tends to appear greener on the other side of the fence, once women jump over the fence—so to speak—that which they left often appears to be better than their new relationship. This leads to regrets and confusion in that the woman begins to doubt her ability to judge men.

A third mistake is—made more by men than by women, but which can seriously affect a relationship if made by the woman—in expecting too much too soon. Patience in relationships is a virtue. Impatience in relationship can be deadly to relationships—or even in finding someone with whom to establish a relationship.

A fourth mistake is—made by men as much as women—in trying to change the rules of the relationship after the wedding. This nasty little

* "The resistant woman," 20 September 2004.

surprise has wrecked more marriages than seashells on the seashore. Like trying to trade up in men, past failed relationships can adversely affect a woman's ability to adequately appraise men.

A little honesty can go a long way in improving one's chances for success. Conversely, someone incapable of appreciating honesty also lacks the empathy necessary for a long-term relationship.

To establish a workable relationship, a woman needs to look for a man who really wants her as a person. Acceptance is as much of the formulation for a satisfactory relationship as being taken in hand for an old-fashioned straightening out. Some aspects of a woman's personality are not amenable to altering by thrashing.

Conversely, even among dire warnings to the contrary, the courageous man is seldom totally averse to soundly smacking the bottom of a woman whom he really wants to keep if he finds her behavior detrimental to their relationship.

Still, there are no perfect men any more than there are perfect women in this world. As more than a few wise observers have pointed out, "If you found the truly perfect man [or woman] would he [or she] really want to have anything to do with you?"

Good marriages are made. Spontaneous generation of first-class marriages is about as common as the spontaneous generation of viable life forms! Marriages supposedly made in heaven require a tremendous amount of work on earth.²⁵⁵

I have often read women pine for a dominant man. Of course he should have all the right qualities. He should be loving, firm, sexy and someone naturally dominant would be perfect.

But here is what life has taught me and what I have told friends and internet friends who are single and looking.

When you meet someone, it's almost impossible to find out immediately if he is dominant. In fact that's not what is the most important quality anyway.

Everything in a successful marriage has one thing in common. They love each other. Pure, true love and devotion. So much can be overcome once this has been established. Once a relationship is established, then the points in question can be looked for. Can you submit? Can or is he dominant? Is there wiggle room in your basic natures to accommodate what you want or need? Is there a place to grow and change, for the positive? I think this is what needs establishing before anyone gets controlled or dominated.

We have often read of couples who are in long term marriages and one of them brings this to the table. And it works. After peaks and valleys, they find a path. And why does it work? Because there was always the denomination of love. Now, if you are in a marriage where you love your partner—not a passion, but some other love—this may or may not work. It still depends on basic character and natures.

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But when you are in a budding relationship, I still say it's the love that will endure. Dominance and discipline can come and go, depending on circumstance and life. But love will see you through. Look for that, and the rest is about honesty and being forthright and playful. Then everything will fall into place. At least in my opinion.

With a foundation, you have trust and deep love. While intimacy may mean being naked and having sex, that is not the real deep meaning of it.

To give your trust, your vulnerability to someone, that is intimate. To open yourself and your body to someone who loves you is far the greater risk than having a quickie with someone you'll have the choice of seeing again or not.

So much of being Taken In Hand starts with a mind-frame. A woman may give her submission, but it's when she trusts her partner/husband to love her, she is giving her submission with the desire to give even more than she knows how. He will prod and evoke. She will bend and submit. Very erotic, very intimate, very trusting and full of love. Can this be done with someone who doesn't love you? I seriously doubt it²⁵⁶

"QUIETLY TAKEN IN HAND" (20 NOVEMBER 2004)

I am in my mid forties and have been married for a long time. My husband and I met in a very fundamentalist church, where men were taught to be head of the household

and women to submit, which we never questioned at that time. It worked for us. We were happy, busy raising a family.

Sometime later we left that religion and belief system during some difficult years. Yet our marriage continued on in the same manner, with D being the head of the household (head of the household). I wondered if we needed to change in our marriage, and what and why.

After some time and lots of reading, I've come to the conclusion that what we have is right for us. He is a gentle, kind, dominant guy. I submit to him easily, I trust him, we can discuss issues, he listens to my opinion, does his best to fulfill my needs and lots of my wants, too. I know he has my best interests at heart.

I've never been physically punished, can't even imagine what awful thing I could do to warrant such measures. (An affair? Street drugs? Pretty much things I would never do, anyway!) I have had a lecture or two, and have had my spending curtailed, and that works for me. The disappointed look and stern voice—yup that works for me.

I don't really get the spanking thing some other Taken In Hand folk like, but that is probably because I avoid pain as much as possible. I can see it as sexual, I can see it as being cathartic, and I can even see it when trying to overcome a bad habit that nothing else seems to help. I've also seen grown women—and men—throw tantrums like a two year old, and I thought maybe they ought to be spanked!

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But pain, giving or receiving, makes me feel rather sick to my stomach. Not sexy at all. SM, I'm not.

Do I feel like a servant or slave? Not at all. I do take care of the house, kids, pretty traditional stuff, but I'm good at that and enjoy it. And it is appreciated and rewarded. I see myself more as being treated like a princess, cared for, protected, loved, cherished.²⁵⁷

"LOVE AND FEAR" (24 NOVEMBER 2004)

Years ago, I recall, I first heard the saying, "Where there is fear there can be no love, and where there is love there can be no fear." Even then, my immediate gut-level response, as a sexually submissive woman who adores powerful, dominant men, was: "Well, why the heck not?"

While love and fear might be incompatible emotions for some people, for others those two things are perfectly compatible. But there are only two sorts of loving relationships in which I find fear is an appropriate emotion for me; one is as a sexually submissive woman, in my romantic love for a dominant man; and the other is as a devout pagan, in my religious love for the Gods. (And for me these two are intimately connected, in that I'm seeking a man whom I could adore as an aspect or expression of the God that I worship.) I am simply incapable of being deeply and erotically attracted to a man unless there is an element of fear there; specifically, fear of his physical, masculine strength and how he might use it. That is the sort

of fear it takes to awaken my submissive nature and my sexual desire.

But there is no way I would ever want a man to actually injure me; a few welts and bruises might be fine, but no serious injury, and nothing permanent. If I got the idea that there was even a one percent chance that he might seriously harm me, I would be out of that relationship in a minute. I have always been very protective of my health and wellbeing, and I always will be. This is not any sort of self-destructive urge on my part; it's just about the erotic thrill of being dominated and intimidated.

But if I trust that he will not really injure me, then what does that leave to be afraid of? It's an interesting dilemma; and one obvious answer someone might come up with is "pain." One can certainly cause lots of pain without real injury; so I can imagine that could be an effective way of inducing fear. But I'm not so sure that it would bring out my *sexual* submission, because I'm not really all that much into pain; although some pain is fine. I'd prefer that we could find other ways of arousing my submissive inclinations.

For me, that is happily accomplished by all sorts of harmless "bullying" tactics, where a man can physically control and forcefully intimidate me without causing any injury or even much real pain. That includes pushing, wrestling, swatting, and so on. The way that works, I think, is like this: my conscious mind knows that I love and trust this man completely, and he would never really harm me; but my subconscious mind knows no such

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thing at all, so it's reacting from purely visceral animal instincts of fear and submission. And somehow, it's the very dissonance of those two different emotional levels that makes it so thrilling for me. If you take away either the fear or the trust, then it would lose its appeal.

Within a Taken In Hand sort of relationship, it is understood that this sort of force will not be injurious to the woman, and that the dominant man already has her blanket consent to engage in this sort of rough play. But even so, there are still some people who are alarmed at the idea that a woman would have reason to fear the man she loves, or that she would deliberately seek out a mate that she would be afraid of.

But some have compared this pleasurable fear to the enjoyment some people get from riding roller coasters or watching horror movies. Or one might also compare it to the thrills of skiing, skydiving, wrestling alligators, or other risky sports. I'm not personally someone who seeks thrills via fear—at least, not in any way other than that of being forcefully conquered by a strong dominant man. But I do think there's something similar going on there, in that moving through one's fears can be quite an ecstatic and transformative experience.

I have noticed that it's mostly men who are driven to the thrill-seeking adventure sports, whereas women are more often drawn to finding their thrills with dangerous men; or at least with men who have an aura of the "dangerous" about them. This also shows up in myth, where the heroes engage their destiny by joust-

ing with dragons and other monsters; whereas feminine figures often have frightful encounters with terrifying male lovers.

Into this latter category I would place the rape of Persephone by Hades, and the story of Eros and Psyche; as well as a number of stories involving gods with mortal women, such as Zeus with Semele. It also figures into fairy tales, like Beauty and the Beast; and popular monster movies like King Kong—with the ferocious giant beast gripping poor little Fay Wray firmly in his huge, hairy fist. Popular romantic folklore includes the vampire who preys on women's passions and their blood; vampires are considered the epitome of sexy male dominance by many women. There is also the legend of the incubus—the demonic male lover of mortal women who stealthily creeps into women's bedrooms at night, and ravishes them as they dream.

The power of these dark visions lies in their potential for pushing us beyond all our emotional boundaries, and thereby bringing about a profound psychological awakening and spiritual transformation. In most cases that potential is not fully realized, of course; but that is the pull and the fascination that these alluring nightmares have on our subconscious minds, I believe. They seduce us into a numinous experience, along the lines of Rudolph Otto's "Mysterium Tremendum et Fascinans." (That is, the terrifying and fascinating divine mystery that draws us in, even against our will).

This is also one way in which a woman's fear of a dominant man can

be an essential erotic element of a loving romantic relationship. It's just not as straightforward as a simple fear of pain; nor is it really about the fear of a dominant man's disapproval if he were to be disobeyed. Rather, it's the primal fear of being overwhelmed and swept away by something dark, powerful, and mysterious—something that can move a woman into a deeper dimension of vulnerability and awe than she has ever experienced before. A fathomless abyss is reached, a place where she has no real choice but to surrender and to trust, to yield in trembling rapture to the compelling power of the man she loves. When he pushes her over the edge, she falls; but it's a flight of ecstasy that engulfs and consumes her, while he remains firmly in control. When that dimension is opened in a relationship, there is an immense deepening of both trust and love. The man's dominance becomes more profound and more compelling, and the romantic dynamics of conquest and surrender begin to glimmer with the potent spiritual aura of the ancient religious mysteries.

That's what I'm seeking in my quest for a dominant man, anyway. Like Psyche herself, trembling in the night as she slowly approaches the bed of Eros with the light of her only candle, I'm moving toward some great unknown that could utterly consume me. It's a quest that requires every ounce of my courage and my trust. But the potential reward is worth everything that I have, and everything that I am.²⁵⁸

"MY MARRIAGE IS A SAFE HAVEN" (25 NOVEMBER 2004)

I think of my home and my marriage as a safe haven. I know that if anyone tried to hurt me or my kids, my husband would be all over it. Phone call, 911, left hook, whatever.

When he is out of town I can't sleep! I'll only get four or five hours, because he is not next to me in bed. He finds this a little amusing and calls to remind me to take a nap.

I do hate causing a problem or telling him I've done something stupid. I hate hearing his stern voice and disappointing him. I do feel trepidation in those events, but I never am fearful of him physically (we are not into the spanking punishments.) I listen well and screw up as rarely as possible. But then, he overlooks little things and I never feel like I have to jump through hoops to keep him happy.

I love being dominated in bed in non-painful ways—like having my hands held in one of his while he makes love to me, or being told to do sexy things. But that is in the realm of play. I don't see how being slammed against a wall would make sex better, but then I'm not into pain. In fact, when something painful has happened by accident (he is a foot taller than I and about 80 lbs heavier) it has brought things to a screeching halt, not a higher level of arousal.

In real life, I love that he is the head. I feel secure in that. It makes family life easier, too, because my kids have that same respect for him, and for me, too. I'm the one he pro-

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texts, not the one he fights. I guess we settled the who's the boss issue years ago, and I don't even remember conflicts over that issue.²⁵⁹

"A REALITY CHECK FOR CRITICS" [2] NOVEMBER 2004]

To: Anonymous Taken In Hand Reader

I gather you believe the following ideas, based on your posts; I've paraphrased them here, but I think I've captured the gist. Let me suggest you do some "reality checks" on these ideas:

(1.) Decent men are not willing to get "rough" with women—only abusers do that; if a man pushes you, then he's likely to beat you up badly sometime.

Sorry, but that's a myth along the same lines as "a smart, competent, independent and assertive woman would never, ever want a man to dominate her, or spank her, or ravish her." It also reminds me of the fallacious "slippery slope" arguments used in the "war on drugs"—which imply that if someone starts partakes of a natural, non-addictive herbal intoxicant like cannabis, then they're hell-bound to wind up as heroin junkies or amphetamine freaks. Or that someone who enjoys a daily glass of wine or beer is bound to escalate to imbibing quarts of vodka and whiskey, and dying in the gutter, soaked with booze. It's just not true, any of it.

But websites against "domestic violence" perpetuate that lie, along with many others, in their lists of "warning signs" to look for in "po-

tential abusers." Many of those "warning signs" sound like a shopping list of features that women seeking a dominant man would look for. That's because there's often a hidden feminist agenda at those sites, one that opposes male dominance in intimate relationships, no matter how consensual. They tell lies about the terrible dangers of a little harmless shoving, for the same reason that the "war on drugs" folks tell lies about the terrible "dangers" of a little harmless cannabis: because their underlying agenda is all about an *ideology*, not about a realistic assessment of actual dangers. Most men who shove or even slap women don't escalate into punching them senseless. If that's true in most cases, then realize how much *more true* it would be in a relationship where there is a consensual agreement as to the man's right to engage in some harmless bullying, and frank discussion about the dangers of going too far, where the lines are drawn, etc.

I will add that I find it quite hilarious that so many people seem to think that a little swat or a push is bound to escalate into a maddened, bone-crunching rampage on the man's part. I studied karate for a few years, during which time I lived with my boyfriend, who was a black belt. We had a great time practicing karate techniques, or putting on the pads and sparring. He was very experienced, so he knew exactly when and how to pull a blow; I trusted him in that regard much more than I would trust someone who was not a martial artist. We spent probably ten or more hours a week hitting each other; and as often

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as not, it ended up in the bedroom. He was not quite the man I've been looking for, but that's beside the point. The point is, a little well-controlled physical combat does not have to be "dangerous" — nor does a man have to be an "abuser" to enjoy doing that.

(2.) I could be quite happy with a "dominant" man who did not get physically rough with me; maybe just a little spanking and/or BDSM, or just agreeing that he's the "head of the household" and that would be enough to satisfy me.

You don't know me at all, or you would not even hazard such a guess. I am not really into spanking, nor BDSM, nor the "head of the household" thing; although I am willing to explore some aspects of those three things if I can find the right man to love and dominate me. What I mean by that is precisely that he is willing to conquer me: to get a little bit rough with me, use his strength to physically defeat me, and intimidate me with the realization of what he *could* do to me if he chose to. That is the big erotic thrill for me, and always has been. The other stuff — spanking, whips and chains, BDSM protocol and rituals, servitude, "head of the household" and etc. — is stuff that I used to snicker at and regard as vaguely ridiculous. Why? Because it seemed to me totally irrelevant to the business of a man actually dominating a woman, and the erotic thrill that I get from that. You are therefore being unintentionally absurd when you suggest that I could just drop that one little thing from my shopping list for a dominant man — because that's the main

thing on the list, and the one thing that is absolutely necessary if I am to have any sort of hot erotic relationship. It's not an option; it's an absolute.

(3.) I am a naive romantic, in danger of getting trapped in an abusive relationship if I don't try and change this essential feature of my sexuality.

I've already made it quite clear that I have no intention of being seriously injured, and that I would leave any relationship where that seemed like a real possibility. (And I've done that once before, by the way.) The sort of domination that I enjoy from a man obviously requires a large amount of trust, as I noted in the article. It also would entail some serious conversations about how to avoid getting into a danger zone, and etc. Nothing in life is risk-free, including dominant men. But I think that a man who is clear on his dominance and who has ways of channeling that and expressing it safely is actually much *less* dangerous than a man for whom there is lots of pent-up rage that he has suppressed under cover of "niceness."

(4.) I am a naïve romantic, oblivious to the real necessities of life such as cooking, laundry, paying bills, etc.

I'm well aware of all that, thanks; been doing it for years. I've lived for several years now with a man who's been my best friend for over two decades, since we were in college. (We're sort of like "Will and Grace," except that we're both straight.) I understand that dealing with daily reality and getting along with someone over the years requires compromises and adjustments, etc. So

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what? How is that in any way relevant to what I need in a specifically *romantic* relationship? That's what I'm talking about in my quest for a dominant man—what my erotic and romantic needs are. I take it for granted that a lot of the other stuff will be there as well; but I see no reason why there should be any contradiction between doing the laundry and seeing that my erotic needs and desires are met. Why are you implying those aspects of a relationship would be incompatible?

(5.) Somehow, I expect the man to just start dominating and intimidating me “from the get go.”

No, I've already said in other posts that this is something that a man needs to learn how to test for; but that's true of any sort of dominant/submissive activities, or even sexual desire in general. This is definitely a consensual relationship I'm talking about here; but there are various ways of interpreting “consent.” There are some mild ways to start out doing this, that I've mentioned before: arm-wrestling, or playful wrestling on the bed, or the man pinning her arms behind her as he's kissing her, etc. It's also possible to talk about it, but I don't really like to do too much of that, especially to start with. I don't want a man to hand me a questionnaire as to what sorts of activities I enjoy and don't enjoy. I want him to do some curious exploring, and find my magic buttons for submission. If a man pushed me into a wall on our second date, I'd be concerned; but if he didn't do that after a dozen dates, I'd be bored.

Finally, regarding your comment about “almost perfect, but not quite”—I'd be overjoyed to find a man who was “almost perfect.” However, my need for a dominant man who enjoys conquering me physically is not just the icing on the cake—it *is* the cake. And yes, there is a whole list of other rare qualities that are absolute necessities in my book, as well. (In addition to dominant, he needs to be intelligent, pagan, witty, emotional, physically strong, and attractive to my eyes.) And as I've said elsewhere, I'm not willing to “settle” for anything less than the essentials. I can be quite happy alone, so if I don't happen to find what I need in a man, then I would prefer to remain single. But I don't see any particular reason why I shouldn't be able to find what I'm looking for, so that's what I plan to do in the meantime. Even if I don't happen to find my man, it will do the world some good to hear about the desire that many women have for strong, powerful, masculine, dominant men.²⁶⁰

“HAS FEMINISM GONE TOO FAR?” (27 NOVEMBER 2004)

Many men and women today are rediscovering the joys of masculine dominance and leadership within a romantic relationship; that's what the Taken In Hand website is all about. But men's dominance over women is something that feminism has denounced for several decades. Does that mean that Taken In Hand is incompatible with feminism? I'd say that all depends on what one

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means by the term “feminism.” It has changed meaning over the decades, so that today’s feminism would be almost unrecognizable to the early feminists who fought for votes and career opportunities for women.

One fateful turn, in particular, came with the idea that “the personal is political.” This idea implied that to be truly a feminist, a woman had to practice complete gender equality in her personal relationships—or even take the lead, to make up for the sins of the past. This was basically a logical fallacy, which confused one sort of category (the political equality of men with women, in the public sphere) with a very different category (the equality of one specific man with one specific woman, in the very private and intimate arena of marriage). Feminism, which started out as being all about more choices for women, thus became one more dogma seeking to *limit* their choices; but now it was being done in the name of political correctness.

Thus, women’s “liberation” started to be seen as a matter of “liberating” them from having intimate relationships with men, especially masculine and dominant men. At the far extreme, books by feminist authors started to denounce all sexual intercourse between men and women as “rape,” (especially if the man was on top, gods forbid) and lesbian love became *de rigueur* if one were to be a truly “liberated” woman. We began to see widespread hysteria about “date rape” and “domestic violence” with over-inflated figures that claimed that most women were victims of male abuse of one sort or

another; even though the women interviewed often did not even agree that assessment. And that abuse was blamed on the One Sin That Explains All Sins Against Women: namely, masculinity and male dominance.

Masculinity itself became the enemy to be defeated, and we started to see the “gender deconstructionists” take over the academic world, with their bizarre notions that gender differences are not innate at all, but rather “socially constructed.” (The fact that other mammals exhibit many of the same gender differences that humans do is a fact that they conveniently overlook. A cow is a very different animal from a bull.) The point of all that is to convince us that we have the power to change our perceptions of gender: if Nature didn’t give us gender differences, then we can choose how we view gender. But Nature itself does not comply with that vision, and continually offers up proof that gender differences are innate. Therefore not all feminists were convinced; some thought men were just different, period.

This branched off into the two main feminist ways of viewing men: either men really are different from women, hence evil; or men really can be just the same as women, so we should aim all our efforts at emasculating them. Taken to an extreme, the first camp aims at the eventual elimination of men, through technologies allowing for female-only reproduction; while the second camp aims at turning men into something like women, only with slightly different plumbing. In

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neither of these depressing visions is there any room for the strong, proud, glorious, masculine, dominant alpha male that feminine women respect, appreciate, and admire so much.

One might object by saying that's not mainstream feminism, that's just the radical extreme; but the point here is that feminism will inevitably become more radical and extreme, because as soon one set of goals is attained, then it has to move on to another, more extreme set of goals and start pushing for those. That is the only way feminism can justify its continued existence; because otherwise we would just say that feminism has attained its goals, and its business is done.

There are still places in the world (such as the Middle East, Africa, or parts of Asia) where the primary goals of feminism have yet to be reached; these are places where women are not allowed to vote, drive cars, work outside the home, and etc. But in most English-speaking countries (and most Western nations overall), those goals were attained long ago and we're now at the point of arguing such inane matters as whether or not women are equally capable as men to go trudging through battlefields lugging 100 pound backpacks and slugging it out in hand-to-hand combat with enemy troops. (In case you need a reality check: no, they're not.) Men and women may be equally equipped to be scientists and engineers and business tycoons; but they are not equally equipped to be soldiers, firefighters, boxers, or other strenuous occupations.

On the personal front, we see the inanity manifest in such things as "mandatory arrest" laws for domestic violence; wherein if someone calls about any sort of disturbance, the police are obligated to arrest at least one of the two parties, which is almost always the man, even if the woman objects and insists she was not being abused. We have the absurd paradox that if a woman gets some bumps and bruises on the soccer field, then both she and her opponents are viewed as heroes; but if she gets similar bumps and bruises at the hands of her beloved husband in a consensual relationship of masculine dominance and feminine submission, then she's a "victim" and he's a "criminal" subject to prosecution. Even a harmless push or shove that leaves no marks at all is now considered "violence" and a "dangerous warning sign." And when the husband is sentenced to "counseling" for domestic violence, what does he hear? Quite often, he hears that the real problem is that he's trying to control and dominate his wife; many such programs are feminist based, and they revolve entirely around the axis of opposition to male dominance in relationships.

I'd say it's clear that feminism has gone way too far, in at least three dimensions:

- (1.) Asserting gender equality in all things, even where the genders are obviously and innately different.
- (2.) Extending "equality" from the social/political sphere and into the personal/private sphere.

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- (3.) A hysterical response that far exaggerates the real threats that women sometimes do face from men, with regard to sexual harassment, violence or rape.

I'll add that I once supported the goals of feminism. And I was part of the movement of women into careers formerly reserved for men, since I've worked in applied science and engineering research. However, what has happened since then is that feminism has become a moving target. It no longer means what it once did, so I no longer call myself a feminist. Also, while I was always aware of my need for a sexually dominant man, I was unclear on just how to fulfill that, or what made it so difficult to find. I now have a much clearer idea of what I want, and I also understand what is stopping it; and I have to say that the bulk of the blame goes to the excesses of the feminist movement for trying to feminize men and "equalize" our most intimate relationships. (Of course, the "nice" feminist-brainwashed men must share some responsibility for that, too; but if they really are convinced that all women want wimpy men, then you can see how confused that would leave them.)

So, I've undergone a journey from feminist to non-feminist; or even, in some respects, to anti-feminist. This has often provoked righteous indignation from feminists who feel that I somehow owe them something for the benefits that I have enjoyed from the feminist movement. They seem to miss the point that I was one of those early feminists; and like many

of the women who supported feminism's early goals, I feel that I was *betrayed* by the feminist movement. Had I known back then just how ridiculous and destructive it would become, I would surely have thought twice before sending in my donations to N.O.W. and subscribing to Ms. Magazine so many years ago. Today, I feel that it's partly my job to stop the rampant insanity that radical feminism has brought into the world. We need to take a look at what is natural and appropriate for men and women, and how to cultivate and appreciate our innate gender differences; we need to gain a new respect for both masculinity and femininity, and find ways of making those profound sexual differences a meaningful part of our lives and our relationships.

One way that any woman can make a difference is by expressing her respect and appreciation for strong, heroic, masculine men; and by taking a proud and unabashed stance with regard to her own desire for a manly, dominant man. Women are often shy about this, not only because of the impact of feminist dogma, but also because of a certain innate feminine modesty; there is something ironic about being assertive about one's sexual submissiveness. It's unfortunate that it even has become an issue that needs to be argued in public; but the time has come when it really needs to be said, and it needs to be said by women. Because feminist dogma can easily demonize men for wanting to dominate women—but it's much harder to do that if women themselves express the desire for a dominant man.

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I am interested in hearing how others feel about feminism, especially as it impacts our perceptions of masculinity and femininity, and intimate relationships for those of us who want a male-dominated romance or marriage. My guess is that most of us supported feminism up to a point, but then there came some point where we said, "No, that's just going way too far." But I imagine that exactly where that point is varies from person to person. I'd like to hear at just what point others feel that feminism went over the edge. Just where do you draw the line between "good feminism" and "bad feminism"?²⁶¹

"THE TOTAL WOMAN, BY MARABEL MORGAN: A BOOK REVIEW" (1 DECEMBER 2004)

I had been wanting to read *The Total Woman*, by Marabel Morgan, for years. I had heard that it was like *Fascinating Womanhood* but much more sexy. As one who guiltily reads books like *Fascinating Womanhood*, by Helen Andelin, and *The Surrendered Wife*, by Laura Doyle, as erotic literature more than anything else, this sounded promising. Doyle and Andelin may have been silent on the subject of how extremely exciting it can be to be in an unequal relationship, but perhaps Morgan had mentioned the unmentionable.

The other day, I finally got my hands on a used copy of *The Total Woman* and read it. Evidently designed for housewives who are too busy ironing socks to waste time

reading, it didn't take more than a few hours to read from cover to cover. I really wanted to like it, but it didn't live up to my expectations. Even the part on sex managed to be entirely unexciting.

It has some cute headings and its tone is more fun and light-hearted than *Fascinating Womanhood* and *The Surrendered Wife*, but it is so light on content that it almost makes *The Surrendered Wife* look deep—not an easy feat.

If you are a disorganised, frazzled Christian housewife and mother who has been snapping at her husband, bossing him about, and rejecting him sexually for years, you might find this book useful. The entire first part is about how to become more organised, and there is a large section on parenting too, because a "Total Woman" is more than just a good wife: she is an organised woman, a great housekeeper and a good mother, too. (But that's about it, as far as I can tell.)

Marabel Morgan's theory of "how to make your marriage come alive" is partly commonsense, part *The Stepford Wives*, and partly even more unwise than turning yourself into a Stepford wife.

The commonsense is fairly obvious stuff about not trying to change your man, and about being positive and effervescent and so on. For example, a cheery smile in the morning and an enthusiastic welcome when your husband comes home from work may make him feel good, and if he feels good, he will be nice to you, and everything will go swimmingly. That is, as long as he is the kind of man who *likes* that. Some people

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prefer zero interaction until they have had a chance to relax for half an hour after they get home from work. But you can see what the author is trying to say, even if she rather seems to assume that everyone has the same preferences.

Laura Doyle's *The Surrendered Wife* has often been criticised as advocating that women should turn themselves into Stepford wives, but *The Total Woman* seems to me much closer to advocating that. *The Surrendered Wife* has many faults to be sure, but it doesn't assume that a woman's only focus in life is her husband, home and children in quite the way *The Total Woman* seems to. I am all for women cherishing and focusing on their men, but Marabel Morgan appears to take the view that what a man wants is a woman who will make him, their home and children her whole life.

Some of the author's suggestions are excellent, but some seem positively frightening. She advises readers even to take up the same interests and hobbies as their husbands—yes, if fishing is his passion, you have to get up at 4 a.m. and go fishing with him for four hours if you want a good marriage; if he loves cars, you have to become knowledgeable about cars too; if he likes rugby, you have to learn the rules and the players and read the reports of games so you can talk enthusiastically to him about the latest player transfer. Why? Because when a husband talks about something important to him, some wives fail to engage with what their husband is saying and ask him to pass the salt.

If your husband is telling you something important to him (like what happened in the latest rugby game, or about his sighting of a “ruby-throated hummingbird nectaring at the zinnias”) obviously, asking him to pass the salt, or complaining about the neighbours' new garden furniture, is not ideal! But it doesn't follow that you should spend large amounts of precious ironing time (or whatever you like doing) teaching yourself ornithology or learning the rules of rugby, let alone going to a rugby match every Saturday, if that idea is about as appealing to you as ironing socks would be to me. It is perfectly possible to be supportive of a man and his interests without changing your entire life and dropping your own interests to do so. And how many men would really want a woman who spends so much time pursuing his interests that she has no time for her own? (On the other hand, quite a few women like rugby without having any idea what the rules are. All those big strong men bounding about and piling into each other in violent scraps—er, scrums, I mean.)

Marabel Morgan advises giving your husband a lovely home-cooked dinner every day, which you prepare in the morning after the breakfast you have cooked for the family. And don't forget to lay the table for dinner in the morning, after waving your husband off to work, and before doing all the housework necessary to keep your home spotless, and reading up on his interests.

And when your husband comes home from work, you are to greet him at the door wearing a different

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sexual fantasy costume every day, the aim being to signal your sexual availability and adventurousness. Now this might be a dream come true for some husbands, but not for all. The author does not seem to know what Laura Doyle knows, namely, that sometimes it is not the husband who feels sexually deprived, as seems to be assumed in this book, but the wife. In such a case, following Marabel Morgan's advice might well add more sexual pressure and put the husband off even more. He might feel manipulated or expected to perform on demand, and no good can come of that. So if you read this book, do not follow the advice mindlessly. There is so much that could be disastrous!

That is my view. If you have read the book, what do *you* think of it?²⁶²

"WEDDING VOWS—I PROMISED TO 'OBEY'" (3 DECEMBER 2004)

We have been married for 30 years and "to obey" was in our wedding vows. I didn't think much about it then, I just took it for granted that it was part of the vows. I was 21 years old at the time and was so deeply in love that I was just thrilled to be marrying the love of my life.

Knowing what I know now I wish I had known what that vow really means. Our marriage was good but it could have been so much better if I had known.

This summer I decided that I wanted to learn about trust and obedience it just happened that I found the Taken In Hand site by accident. I shared it with my hus-

band and he checked it out, then we decided to incorporate Taken In Hand and the idea of obedience in our marriage relationship.

I have learned a lot and I am still learning and what I can say is that doing this has enhanced our relationship. I am no longer the control freak that I was. I used to think I had to control everything, from my job to our marriage. You can imagine what that was like.

Now, well, I still have to be in control of some things, like my position in my job, but even there I am more relaxed and easygoing. At home my husband and I discuss things and he listens to my input and considers my suggestions but he makes the final decision. Obedience doesn't mean that a woman is a lesser person nor does it mean she is a doormat.

Obedience has changed our marriage because it has changed me. What I mean by "change" is that when I make the choice to obey my husband I feel a sense of satisfaction. (There are times when I take a step backwards and my husband brings me back into focus and rather quickly!)

Obedience is a choice, and as I see it, it is like a gift given to a marriage. It is entirely up to the two individuals involved to decide what vows to make in marriage. But if you like the idea of promising to obey, I encourage you to do so. It may not be popular these days, and it doesn't matter what other people think. It matters what the two of you getting married think. Just follow your hearts.²⁶³

"RELATIONSHIP AND HEALTH VERSUS PRODUCTIVITY" (3 DECEMBER 2004)

When I first started this new kind of relationship with my husband, I began by committing to going to bed at the same time he did every night.

For most of our married life (20 plus years) my husband has worked very long hours, come home well after dinner time, and stayed up until the wee hours working on his computer. After I had become ill with an autoimmune disease a few years ago, I had started going to bed very early—by nine or ten at the latest. As a result, our sex life suffered (of course) but my husband also became even more sleep deprived since he had no one to remind him to come to bed.

Several months ago, I offered to stay up until eleven and make myself available to him sexually or for a backrub every single night if he would come to bed on time. I bought new nighties and it worked wonders. Within a couple of weeks, I was finding out that my dear husband was even more wonderful when he's had enough sleep, he was more productive at work, and our sex life was tremendous.

However, by losing two or three hours of sleep at night, I was becoming very tired, very quickly. Sleeping late was not an option because of taking the children to school, so I began to nap during the day in order to be fresh in the evening for my husband. Fortunately, I am able to do this, but the interruption in the day certainly makes for a less productive life. Because of my illness, I

also diet very carefully and work out three or four times a week.

Exercising does not feel very productive to me since I was raised as a strong Protestant with a Calvinist work ethic. However, being the kind of wife and mother that I have decided to be requires me to take care of my health and be rested for my children after school and my husband at night. I am having to rethink my upbringing and to silence the voice of my mother in my head in order to feel comfortable not doing very much. I was raised in a feminist home in a feminist culture, and being wholly about relationships rather than productivity was never presented as an option.

Last night my husband spanked me for breaking some diet commitments I had made to him, and afterwards I asked him to please ground me as well. We had never done this, but because I was suffering from a cold and was obviously tired, he said I had to stay home all day except for taking the children to and from school and getting a few groceries. It was so wonderful to feel as if I *had* to stay home—that I simply did not have permission to run around town doing things. Now I'm considering asking him to ground me at least once a week!

Why can't I do this for myself? I don't know—but I think most of the women who come to this website will understand that obeying a man who has our best interests at heart is easier than doing something good for ourselves. I'm not sure why that is, but I am grateful that my husband is willing to give me that structure and security!²⁶⁴

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"THE SOOTHING EFFECT OF VOWING TO OBEY" (3 DECEMBER 2004)

Almost four decades ago, my wife shocked her peers by promising to obey. Some of her more liberal friends probably thought her out of her mind.

At the time, equality was the rising social tsunami in America. Anything that a man could do, a man had to believe that any woman could do better. After all, the law all but said so!

Yet, few people realized the depth of her commitment or her intrinsic understanding of what was necessary to hold a marriage together in times when "*til death do us part* easily translated into *when the love fades* or into when something better comes along.

Still, she later told me, she was unbelievably calm on her wedding day. There was equanimity that, at the time, she could not explain even to herself. Later, she would describe it as being secure in the knowledge that she was marrying someone able to *take charge* when he needed to do so.²⁶⁵

"MY WIFE CHERISHES ME" (7 DECEMBER 2004)

[The] boss wrote:*

I am all for women cherishing and focusing on their men

* "The Total Woman, by Marabel Morgan: a book review," 1 December 2004.

I am curious to know in a practical way what that really means. How does a woman cherish her man? Books like *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands*, by Laura Schlessinger, may lack real depth, they do make a valid point. I know of many men who would love it if their wives would on a regular basis treat them to a home cooked meal, a back massage, or a great night of sex. They don't feel cherished. Dr. Laura's simple (simplistic?) thesis is that if wives did these kind of things more often their husbands would be more attentive to their needs and desires which would make for a happier marriage.

The specifics of what the wife does for the husband matters less than the fact that the wife makes a regular concerted effort to please him. Don't take me wrong—a good marriage takes the combined effort of both the husband and the wife. I do understand it needs to be a two way street. But my wife has on several occasions commented on how often some of her female friends bitterly complain about their husbands. When she asks what they do for their husbands to make them feel cherished, they don't seem to have much of an answer.

This leads me to ask, do women feel it is part of their duty as a wife to take care of their husbands? Is it just a quaint, old-fashioned notion that no longer has any value in the modern world? Does being taken in hand have any effect on how a wife treats her husband?

My wife takes very good care of me. She is very good at taking care of my needs. She does so because

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she loves me and wants to be a good wife. She also feels it is her duty to do these things for me. For example, she cooks for me almost every night, fixes my plate and brings it to me at the dinner table. I have never required her to do so. I have never told her to get her behind in the kitchen and fix my supper. Perhaps it is her traditional upbringing that motivates her actions. But I think she is motivated by something else, something more meaningful.

I offer this only as an example, not as a road map of what a wife must do. Your husband may prefer other ways that you could demonstrate your loving concern for him. I liked the way Solomon in Proverbs put it:

An excellent wife, who can find?
For her worth is far above jewels.
The heart of her husband trusts in her,
And he will lack no gain.²⁶⁶

"SOME POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF TAKING YOUR WIFE IN HAND" (8 DECEMBER 2004)

One thing I do differently now that my husband is taking me in hand is to give him the respect that he deserves. This is a complete change of attitude for me. I used to be one of the people in the complainer clubs. You know—a bunch of moms together talking badly about the bumbling fools who were their husbands. I think my husband would be shocked to know some of the things I shared about him in these ["bit"] sessions. I have stopped doing this. Not out of duty, but out of respect. Also I feel I have little to complain

about. I no longer see my husband as the bumbling fool who does these inexplicable things. I no longer roll my eyes at the things he decides to do.

I think one thing I do for him is to always be available for sex now. I do think this is an important part of my husband's wellbeing. I had heard old women talking about this, and I had thought it was absurd. Why would I have sex just because he wanted to? I have learned that it really makes him happy, and I have found that making him happy makes me feel good too. What is different now is that I consider his happiness at all. I never really put much thought into it before.

Being taken in hand has completely changed the way I think about my husband and our marriage. My whole outlook is completely different. I never really considered what he wanted, now I consider what he might or might not like in most of what I do. He does not ask this, but I find myself doing it anyway. It is a big change. It is the opposite of the way we were before. Only now instead of neither of us being happy very much, we are both happy most of the time. Funny how it is working out that way.²⁶⁷

"NOW I WANT MY HUSBAND ALL THE TIME" (8 DECEMBER 2004)

Tevemer wrote:*

I think one thing I do for [my husband] is to always be available

* "Some possible benefits of taking your wife in hand," 8 December 2004.

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for sex now. I do think this is an important part of my husband's wellbeing. I had heard old women talking about this, and I had thought it was absurd. Why would I have sex just because he wanted to? I have learned that it really makes him happy, and I have found that making him happy makes me feel good too.

My own feelings about sex since becoming Taken In Hand are rather different. Having sex just because he wanted to is something I used to do occasionally in the past because I didn't want to hurt his feelings. (I generally found that I got in the mood once we'd started anyway, even if I wasn't before.)

One of the big differences about being Taken In Hand is that now I no longer do this, because I find that there is never a time any more when I don't want to do it, I'm turned on by him now *all* the time. This is terrific. Having sex just because he wanted it is something that belongs to my pre-Taken In Hand life rather than the present.²⁶⁸

"SELF-REALIZATION--THE CATAPULT" (8 DECEMBER 2004)

I lived a life that wasn't right for me for reasons I have yet to understand. I do know that whatever those reasons are, they were major factors, probably the only meaningful factors, that caused the death of a marriage before it even started. I am reasonably sure that, absent those factors, the marriage would never have taken place.

The ultimate blame for all this is simply that I didn't know who I was

deep down inside, nor did it matter. I had no direction in life and I had no strong desires, except one that was crushed by poor vision. I wanted to be a pilot, but that was impossible for someone like me, who is legally blind without corrective lenses. That was my one real passion in life as a teen before reality took its toll.

After I learned of the bad news, I took it as a final disappointment from a lifetime of disappointments. I allowed life to bounce me around until it bounced me through several bad relationships, a nearly perfect one that should never have ended, several more bad ones, a miserable marriage and a period of total aimlessness until I began to realize that I need to take charge of my life. For that to happen, I really needed to find out who I am and what I want.

Then a journey to self-realization started, and it almost began without me. It was a long process that started a few years after my divorce, with an author by the name of John Norman. Who would have thought that the most important sequence of events would have been sparked by a pile of old dog-eared paperbacks? Among those dusty volumes were a few episodes of the Gor series. Needless to say, I really enjoyed reading them. At that time, though, my enjoyment stemmed from my bitterness and hatred toward women in general, because of several bad relationships culminating with my divorce. I never dreamed that what was described in those books could even be discussed, let alone lived.

Some years later a Baptist friend of mine invited me to his house for

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supper. I don't remember what we ate, but I was fascinated by the way he and his wife interacted. He would occasionally tell her to do something and she did it with a smile. My brain sizzled with a total lack of comprehension and a very odd sense of pleasure as I observed them. I made no comment to either of them concerning my thoughts on their behavior, but it was really then that I wished I could have a wife like she was.

Later on I discovered BDSM through the Internet. I enjoyed reading about it too, even though I never personally considered indulging in that lifestyle. But my friend and his wife had something that seemed to be missing in BDSM, and I couldn't quite figure it out. It seemed that whatever it was, BDSM came very close, but still missed the target.

Then one day I found a story, supposedly true, that described a teen boy with an older woman. He was the one that initiated their first and subsequent encounters, and it was quite an interesting tale. But what was most intriguing was his sense of control throughout the entire narration. It really struck a chord with me. He was describing *me*, the way *I should* have been. *That* is when I knew I had to change into the man I ought to have been all this time. *That* is the time the relationship between my Baptist friend and his wife *finally* made sense.

It made me realize that maybe my best relationship probably didn't have to end. With her I was "dominant" and she was "submissive" long before I understood the importance of the concepts and what

they truly mean to me. I "took" her by "force". I should have at least *tried* to "hold" her by "force". I may have been able to keep her with me just by uttering the simple words "don't go". But it's too late now and I will never know how it would have ended had I done as I should have.

Shortly after I read the story and the gushing flood of regrets, emotions, and realizations that followed it, I started reading the posts of a married submissive woman who regularly frequents the news groups. In one post she mentioned "www.takeninhand.com" and that hooked me in. By that time I was already in the process of changing, but the writers here gave me some excellent material to work with.²⁶⁹

"BDSM RITUALS AND RULE-BOUND RELATIONSHIPS" (10 DECEMBER 2004)

Perhaps because I am not into the bondage scene and have no real interest in specific BDSM practices, I see bondage as being a Gnostic-like practice claiming to require special knowledge unavailable to non-practioners. Likewise, I have little use for long lists of legalized rules with itemized consequences. All too often the excess in rituals seem to become ends within themselves rather than the means to some higher end.

Anyone who has dealt intimately with a woman over time knows that, although not always overjoyed at the prospects of unceremoniously losing their knickers to a thoroughly

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provoked mate, women do not run from a well-deserved comeuppance.

So, what do women often do? Test a man's resolve? Naturally! Refuse to cooperate? It happens. Protest? Not unheard of. Demand to interfere? Occasionally—especially if a man uses his hand. Actually run? No—not if she trusts the man. Mad because she got spanked? Sometimes. Wants a divorce simply because she was spanked by her husband? Not that I have seen. (In divorce there is something else going on.)

The chains that bind are in a woman's heart. Often there is a certain no-nonsense tone of voice or *that look* which women respect. Although few women are explicit in their requirements, most expect men to *take charge* and eventually come to despise the man in their lives when it does not happen.

Much like the Apostle Paul—who received almost *two hundred lashes* from his irate former comrades and, still, never condemned whipping—many women intuitively understand that merely preserving a pristine backside and unflappable composure solves nothing when more important things fall apart during the shortsighted self-serving conservation effort.

To be sure, couples discover—sometimes even stumble—onto the seemingly magical transformation in their relationship through a variety of means. It might be a logical conclusion or the result of sheer desperation. Others find it through erotic play. Perhaps some discover it through BDSM rituals.

Regardless of the path, domestic discipline comes about when couples realize that *this needs to happen* in order to release the tension and restore the harmony within the marriage. It is part of the *je ne sais quoi* that happens between a man and a woman and that is beyond the ability to language to easily explain.

Although the analysis may seem judgmental, I view BDSM and rule-bound relationships in much the same way as I do a speech impediment in search of fluency. It is not that BDSM is necessarily wrong or even misguided. Some couples may even need the formalized structure that BDSM provides as training wheels for an upright relationship. Yet, as with a myriad of rules and a laundry list of consequences, the rigid formalism seems to lack a facility that is not quite grasped.

In BDSM, there is too much emphasis on ceremony and not enough attention is paid to substance—much like going to a fancy-dan restaurant, having to deal with a pushy French waiter, only to be served a leaf of cabbage floating in a bowl of hot water!²⁷⁰

“AND ADAM KNEW HIS WIFE” (10 DECEMBER 2004)

“And Adam knew Eve, his wife” and she bore a son.

That’s how it all started. It began in a very interesting way. Adam *knew* Eve and the byproduct of that knowledge was a whole new being.

When I was a young man, I was interested in “knowing” as many

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women as I could get into my bed. Baby, whatever it took, that's what I did. I just loved to chase panties and get them off of that girl. Didn't matter what color the panties were, what style, whatever—just so long as they were panties.

This “knowing” stuff was pretty good—it was all about studying women. Kind of reminds me of fishing, you know: learn the habitat, study their habits, monitor the conditions and how they behave in those conditions, throw out the proper bait, and WHAM, you've got a strike. Reel it in by keeping the line taut. Not too fast or you'll lose it! Gently net the lovely creature, and you've got the evening meal. Life was good.

But then, I got married and grew up to be a man.

In growing, I found that something was missing in me. It was something that I yearned for, something that I thirsted for, something that I desperately needed. It was something I observed that solid marriages had, and poor marriages missed. It was something that made two become one. It was something that linked, formed, developed and completed the couple.

Adam *knew* Eve.

I finally found it. This *knowing* wasn't (solely) about sex. No, it was so much more. The knowing was *intimacy*. It didn't happen overnight, this intimacy. It has taken years. It has taken pain, and it has taken risk—the risk to be open and to be hurt. The risk to reveal who you really are to that special someone, and to watch the reaction.

I have come to learn that intimacy is knowing your mate, then positively responding to that knowledge.

We are all different. We are all very complex creatures. There are no two people who are the same. That is what makes us so interesting. In addition to the permutation of the genetic structure that forms us, our personalities also embody the sum total of our experiences after we are born. That's who we are. And how wonderful it is to have that special someone that you are linked to—someone so different from you, yet alike, too—someone you have the rest of your life to explore, and to *know*.

The byproduct of this knowing is equally wonderful. It is a new creation—the two of you.²⁷¹

“TRIALS AND ERRORS - APPEASEMENT FOR ANGER” (11 DECEMBER 2004)

I just ended what appeared to be the beginning of a relationship because the woman made me very angry. She nagged me about some trivial thing that I can't remember. The nagging aggravated me to the point that I considered terminating what we had then and there. But I reconsidered and thought I would make one last effort at saving our budding relationship.

She had no say in the matter, and this was strictly *non-consensual*; I grabbed her, took her over my knee and spanked the tar out of her. She strongly objected and told me to never do that again. I told her that as *my* woman she would submit to my chosen form of punishment as I

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deemed necessary. She then told me I had no right to punish her for anything. I then said if that's the way she felt then there is nothing to hold us together, and then the relationship ended.

I should have started differently. I should have said up front how I would have handled problems with her behavior. Perhaps our relationship would have ended sooner or it may not have ended at all.

I am still at the "trial and error" phase of my new life. This is not an excuse for my actions. This is merely a reminder of how I should have handled my new situation.²⁷²

"PUT WOMEN IN THEIR PLACE" (13 DECEMBER 2004)

KrosRogue's misadventure* could have been ameliorated through application of the PUT principle. PUT is an acronym that stands for:

Patience

Patience in dealing with women is both a necessity and a virtue. Women change their mind. (Just ask one; it is their constitutional right!) A young woman in love can flip-flop on the head of a pin in a nanosecond!

A mistake which self-absorbed men commonly make is expecting too much too soon. Even worse, men sometimes compound the problem by giving too little while expecting too much.

Understanding

Men need to understand women—especially one woman. To understand one woman well is more helpful than trying to make sense out of a thousand women superficially.

To comprehend a woman requires a mental grasp on her mind as well as physically taking her in hand. To do this, a man must both be able to interpret her signals as well as have some sympathy for her as a person.

Part of the understanding is that, although they may not like it when their bottom is smarting, most women do not view spanking as a rape-like violation of their person. Rational women understand the difference between discipline and abuse.

Unless brainwashed by politically correct ideology or otherwise have bats flapping about in the belfry, women do not summon the police as the result of a spanking or threat of a spanking. In fact, in reflection, most discover it to be a positive experience. Failing that, they usually are willing to admit to themselves it was probably deserved.

Timing

Born of patience and understanding, timing is everything. There are decisive moments in relationships. Windows of opportunity do not remain open forever. Women move on to other things.

Women attracted to men give signals that are, in effect implicit permissions. Despite attempts by the politically correct to rewrite the laws of nature, seldom are these permissions explicit. (Often it is the old no from her lips with yes in her eyes.) Men either act on these permissions or they will eventually become despaired.

* "Trials and errors - appeasement for anger," 11 December 2004.

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Acting too soon is like picking and eating green fruit. It can be hard and quite bitter. Waiting until it is too late has difficulties similar to eating rotten fruit. Things can get messy!

Knowing when—or when not to act—is an all too well kept secret in handling women. Relationships cannot be forced. The interaction must develop at its own speed.²⁷³

“IS IT A MISTAKE TO SPANK WHEN ANGRY?” (14 DECEMBER 2004)

This seems to be a touchy subject sometimes. It is something I had not had a lot of experience with until recently. My husband is not one to get angry very easily and we have found that since we have started down the Taken In Hand road that he is rarely angry with me any more. He once said that as soon as he decided to act, then his anger dissipated. It has been a nice side effect to the change in our relationship.

We had talked about it at the beginning. Would he spank me when he was still angry or not? We decided to do a wait and see. I have read that it is dangerous and abusive for a head of the household to spank when angry. I have read this many times, by people I respect. It makes sense on a certain level.

Recently my husband and I had a discussion that got a wee bit out of control. Well I think that is putting in mildly. It got a whole lot out of control. I do not think I have actually seen my husband as angry as he was in the 13 years since I have known him. I was mad, and I knew he was angry, but I pushed that one

little bit more and he lost it. He decided to take me in hand right then and there.

It was sobering for me, but even when he was completely angry it turned out that I was safe with him. He did not get violent; he did not go beyond the bounds of what either of us thought was acceptable. It was the right decision. It ended with a fairly forceful spanking, a few tears, lots of cuddling and great sex. I think if he had waited to calm down, it would have lost some of its effect on us. It completely cleared the air and ended a discussion that was threatening our relationship. I was amazed. It would have been one of those problems that would have lasted for weeks, or more the way we used to be.

The fight was awful, but I am glad we had it. It turned out to be a very moving and powerful experience for us. It made it hit home for me how safe I am in this relationship. If he could stay the course here, we should be able to weather any storm. For us, my husband spanking while he was angry was not abusive at all. It turned out to be exactly the right decision for him to make. I guess if you are the kind of person who may lose control and hurt someone then obviously spanking when angry is wrong for you. We are no longer worried about it. It happened; and it was not a big deal. We no longer need to wonder what he should do. Following his instincts seems to work for us.²⁷⁴

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"CAN PHYSICAL CHASTISEMENT CURE BAD HABITS?" (14 DECEMBER 2004)

Personally, I find all spanking erotic. The more serious it feels when I am being spanked, the more erotic it feels afterwards. Although, since being in a Taken In Hand relationship, I have found that it is possible to be spanked in such a way that during I only feel pain, nevertheless, the after-effect is arousal. Indeed, I can't really imagine it having a beneficial effect on me if I didn't ultimately find it arousing.

I don't really believe that you can cure bad habits by spanking. You have to want to change the habit enough to do it. I honestly don't think that you can use spanking as some kind of aversion therapy. Fear of punishment does not seem to me a good reason for doing or not doing anything, especially not in my case, since fear is an emotion that tends to arouse defiance rather than submission in me. I used to be afraid of my husband when he lost his temper and shouted at me, but it never made me feel submissive, it just made me hate him.

I try to obey my husband (with mixed success) because I find it sexy. Being spanked for being disobedient, rude, bad-tempered or whatever doesn't actually stop me doing those things again, but it makes me feel more affectionate and loving towards my husband and therefore more submissive and therefore more likely to try to obey him in the future. But I can't be cured of bad habits by spanking; it just doesn't work that way for me.

I certainly don't think you should spank someone beyond what both of you are comfortable with. My husband very much dislikes it when he occasionally causes bruises; he doesn't like the idea of hurting me excessively. Charlotte, who has been trying to cure a bad habit through physical chastisement, said that her husband is reluctant to cause her too much pain. I think that is a good thing!²⁷⁵

"DON'T WAIT TOO LONG TO TELL HER" (14 DECEMBER 2004)

After my 13-year marriage came to an end, I was determined that my next relationship was to be different. I had come to realize that I was a dominant male.

During this time I dated a number of women wondering how they would react if I turned them over my knee for a well-deserved spanking. There were a few I did spank, but purely for playful, erotic reasons. (I remember being surprised by how many women enjoyed being spanked) Yet, I knew I desired something more than play. I knew myself well enough to know that I wanted a relationship with a woman who wanted her man to be dominant and to lead.

For me, this was as much a matter of principle as it was a desire. So not long after I started dating my wife-to-be, I made it clear to her what I expected. Although I sensed from some of the things she said that she wanted this kind of life too, I was not sure how she would react. To my great relief and pleasure she

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readily accepted my proposal. So I understand how difficult it is to broach this subject in a budding relationship. But the man who knows that he is dominant and that he expects to lead the relationship must sooner rather than later make clear to his new girlfriend that she can expect to be spanked if she behaves in a way that he finds unacceptable.

Knowing exactly when to have this discussion is a delicate matter, one for which there is no formula. During the early stages the couple is discovering whether there is a basis on which to build a relationship. This is as it should be. After all, there are a significant number of factors regarding compatibility which must be explored.

However, it would be wrong to wait too long to have this discussion. It is all too easy to be swept up in the initial romantic period where things are new and exciting. It would be unfair to the woman, who has invested her heart in a man, only to learn that he propose something later to which she can not give her consent.

There is no doubt that having a woman's consent, whether given explicitly or implicitly, is essential. There is something very powerful about knowing that a woman trusts you so much as to submit to your leadership and discipline.

Having said this, my wife and I have not had a discussion about consent since that first time. It is a subject that does not need to be revisited every time she is about to be spanked. But when first starting out, it is a matter of principle for a gen-

tleman that he takes the time to clearly and patiently explain to his new love what she can expect from him if she acts in a way that he finds unacceptable.

The man who understands women knows he must be considerate, but he must also be able to act decisively and with confidence. And he must, once he has made his wishes known and has her consent, take his woman over his knee early and often.²⁷⁶

"WHY IS BDSM SO POPULAR?" (16 DECEMBER 2004)

Why is BDSM so much more popular than Taken In Hand, and why is it that some BDSM folk are so disapproving of Taken In Hand?

Someone asked me in email recently why there are so many more websites and books devoted to BDSM than there are to Taken In Hand which has some similarities to BDSM but is in some ways closer to more conventional relationships. The Taken In Hand website has only existed for a little over a year, so not everyone who might be interested has found us yet. (Do tell everyone about it and mention the site when you post elsewhere on the internet!) But I think there is another reason for the popularity of BDSM over Taken In Hand—one that won't necessarily always be the case, and one that also sheds light on why some Taken In Hand folk find BDSM as distasteful as many BDSM folk find Taken In Hand (even if none of us would want to impose our own preferences on others).

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Those in the BDSM community have worked tirelessly to develop an ethos that is responsible (anti-abuse, etc.) and acceptable to more conventional folk. This work has been very successful. Whilst most people are not particularly drawn to BDSM themselves, they do not regard those in the BDSM community as mentally ill (any more). To the extent that they know of its existence, most people are aware that BDSM is firmly a part of the liberal tradition rather than a throwback to the bad old days. The BDSM community has successfully argued that BDSM is not a threat to the individual rights we have rightly fought so hard for, it is a sexual kink or lifestyle individuals can legitimately choose. BDSM writers typically stress consent and safety, often advocating the use of a "safeword" when "playing" or in a "scene". Some devote much space to stressing that the control and dominance expressed in these "scenes" is just pretend, not real. BDSM people are proud of the fact that their forums are open to people of all inclinations and orientations.

BDSM is thus seen as a sexual kink, *safe, sane and consensual, non-sexist, nondiscriminatory, an equal opportunities lifestyle, tolerant, inclusive, trendy, thoroughly liberal*, and not having an atavistic tendency in sight! All in all, what could possibly upset anyone about BDSM? It meets all the criteria for political correctness.

By comparison, Taken In Hand has a loooooong way to go to achieve the same level of acceptance from the wider community. Taken In Hand casually violates just about

every taboo in the book. For a start, whilst Taken In Hand is very much a choice and highly consensual in a deep sense, you won't find the BDSM maxim *safe, sane and consensual* peppered around this site. Secondly, this site is aimed strictly at those whose preference is for a relationship in which the man is in control of the woman. This is because Taken In Hand is my website, and I am more interested in exploring my own preferences than in toeing the line or winning any popularity contest. So Taken In Hand has been accused of being sexist, discriminatory, old-fashioned, and atavistic. (I don't think it is at all.) And I have been accused of advocating taking away women's rights, and of advocating even non-consensual "violence against women". (I'm not.) Taken In Hand folk tend to have little interest in "safewords" and "scenes" (or indeed, in "the scene" or "the lifestyle"), and unlike many in the BDSM community, we stress that the control is real. To some, if it is real, then it is by definition abuse. Is it any wonder then that Taken In Hand triggers a little social disapprobation both from society in general and to an even greater extent from some corners of the BDSM community?

Most people would not want to be part of something likely to attract huge disapprobation so BDSM is the safe option. Moreover, success breeds success, and the more well-known and acceptable BDSM has become, the more likely it has become that anyone interested in relationships in which there is an element of control will investigate

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BDSM. But not everyone involved in BDSM is at heart BDSM. I myself assumed that I must have BDSM inclinations many years ago, because there was nothing else out there at the time that I knew of. This seems to be a common experience of those who are drawn to Taken In Hand. People try to squeeze themselves into the BDSM shoe, but it doesn't always fit very well.

One of the reasons I often say that I hate to be put in a box or labelled as being BDSM, DD, D/s, TPE or anything else is that I think that tying oneself down to a particular defined box tends logically to exert pressure upon oneself to become a better fit for the label instead of forging one's own path. Often, people are very much in the process of exploring their nature and preferences, and evolving a better understanding of these things, and in that case, defining themselves can impede the evolution of the self-knowledge that could be so extremely valuable to them in the long-run. It is much easier to discover and develop your own unique preferences and ideas if you aren't stuck in the mire of a lot of fixed ideas.

BDSM is very good at being inclusive and tolerant in some respects, but I find it terribly rigid and fixed in other respects. Some of the most heated criticism on this site has been from BDSM people, for example, on the article *When rape is a gift*.^{*} Indeed, individuals who consider themselves BDSM have started their own forum on consensual "ravish-

ment" because they have been shunned by the BDSM community. Visit any BDSM forum and you will see tedious amounts of arguing about protocol, who may address whom and how, who has been "in the lifestyle" for how long (the implication being that those who have been BDSM for the longest are likely to know more or be more right in their ideas than those who have not), people castigating one another for incorrect form, and lots of stress on how to become "a better submissive" and who may call himself a "master". With its tendency to have quite rigid protocols, assumptions and fixed ideas about how people should interact and what it's all about, BDSM is bound to feel stifling to anyone who wants to explore their own preferences and ideas in this sphere in an unfettered way.

And because BDSM scenes must be "pretend" or "just fantasy" to avoid upsetting the political applecart, a whole rigmarole of jargon and artificial-seeming modes of address and interaction, strange clothing and equipment, and stylised rituals and scenes has developed in BDSM. Even those who do not take the line that the control is just "pretend" (such as D/s, M/s and TPE folk) have been influenced greatly by these things. These things are not really the point at all, they are merely a way of stressing the consensual and harmless nature of BDSM. If we look at the idea of authority and control in itself, there is nothing in those ideas that necessarily leads to BDSM-style forms of expression. People of good will can have different preferences.

^{*} "When rape is a gift," 15 March 2004.

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Some might like one BDSM element but not others. Not all men who want control in a relationship are interested in rules and rituals or making the woman beg or kneel or sit on the floor or eat out of a dog's bowl. Not all men want the woman to call them sir or master or speak in the third person. Not every woman who wants to be under the authority of a man wants to be a BDSM slave, or to wear a BDSM collar, or engage in anything undignified, humiliating or degrading, and not all such women want to be with a man who is into BDSM-style sexual activities.

Lots of different individuals have an interest in relationships in which the man is in control. BDSM people might like highly planned and stylised "scenes"; D/s people might stress the idea of protocols, training and service; DD people might stress punishment spanking; and Taken In Hand people might not want to get too fixed on any one way a man can control a woman.

Another effect of the insistence of many in the BDSM community that the control is just pretend, not real, is that logically, that means that to get the same level of intensity and erotic tension as real control can give, much more extreme practices are needed. Thus, BDSM tends to be associated with extreme sexual activities, kinks and fetishes and (from an outsider's point of view) peculiar protocols and rituals than found in more conventional-seeming or traditional relationships.

Both *because* of its rather odd culture and despite it, BDSM is and will continue to be popular, and probably a lot more popular than Taken In

Hand for many years to come. You might think that BDSM is too liberal for Taken In Hand folk, but in my case at least, you'd be wrong.* For me, BDSM culture is too rigid and intolerant! Taken In Hand is by no means for everyone, but if you are a person who is drawn to the idea of male-controlled relationships and you want to be free to explore your interest without rigid prescriptions and proscriptions about how to behave and what to think, you might find Taken In Hand worth a look.²⁷⁷

"WHAT WOMEN NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MEN" (17 DECEMBER 2004)

A number of months ago my wife and I had three couples over for dinner. They are aware that we lead a D/s lifestyle (it's no secret), but to them it's just about "whips and chains". They have never asked for more information, and I have never volunteered it.

After dinner we were sitting around, and one of the women started a joke which was something along the lines of "What women need to know about men". What followed was a set of man-bashing one liners that everyone (except myself and my wife) found very amusing.

* [This is an answer to a frequently-asked question: this page is part of the FAQ. Please try to ensure that your post is answering the question or discussing the above post. The question is: **Why is BDSM so much more popular than Taken In Hand, and why is it that some BDSM folk are so disapproving of Taken In Hand?**]

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Finally at the end I said, "Well, as far as I'm concerned, women only need to know one thing about men. Women have to do as they are told." This was greeted by uproarious amounts of laughter, and when I said "No, I'm serious", the level of laughter doubled. They could not get it into their heads that I was speaking seriously.

Life is strange that way at times.²⁷⁸

"TRUST IS WHAT MAKES MY RELATIONSHIP SO SPECIAL" (17 DECEMBER 2004)

My husband and I had been married for nineteen years when we started a Taken In Hand relationship. It was very easy for me to disregard any notions of safe-words and consent at the time of each spanking. My trust for this man is so utterly complete that any of that has been unnecessary. He has been so gentle and thoughtful from the first spanking. He was careful to take me just far enough without taking me farther than was reasonable.

How did he know? After knowing me for over twenty years it wasn't too hard. He observes my body language and my verbal language and goes from there. It has been so easy to give him complete trust and is truly one of the most beautiful and fulfilling times of my life. Once as I was laying over his lap waiting, he said, "Do you trust me?" What a silly question. I of course answered that I trust him completely and believe me I wouldn't be in this position if I didn't.

You see, *I* think the difference between Taken In Hand and some

other types of relationships involving dominance and submission is complete trust. I could not put myself in this position with anyone else. Only with someone I have known a long time and already trust implicitly. Trust. That is the issue. It's already there. I give it away freely and he doesn't need to ask for permission. I *know* he would never hurt me although yes it does hurt to be spanked. Sometimes quite a lot.

If I said ok, I no longer want you to be in charge of me and our home, and I no longer will submit to any correction or spanking from you, he would agree. What could he do? He isn't going to force me into anything. This way of life has been a choice on both our parts—his as well as mine. We can both choose to stop at anytime. Do we want to go back to the pre Taken In Hand days? Never! Our relationship is better than it has ever been in the past. I am passionately in love with my husband and I trust him in a new and wonderful way.²⁷⁹

"DOMESTIC DISCIPLINE (DD)" (18 DECEMBER 2004)

Tevemer mentioned that she thinks that there is no difference between Taken In Hand and domestic discipline (DD) but I disagree. Louise said that she thinks that the only difference is that a Taken In Hand relationship need not necessarily involve domestic discipline. So what are the differences?

First, let me stress that of all the different types of forums I have found so far apart from Taken In

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Hand, I feel most in tune with DD (domestic discipline) ones, such as 1domesticdiscipline. Indeed, many Taken In Hand writers and posters post on that and other DD lists frequently.

I really like the thoughtfulness of the DD community, its focus on deeply-intimate long-term relationships rather than casual sex, and the fact that it is about improving relationships rather than sex *per se*. I share with most DD folk a preference for real control over role playing (though playing can be fun); and I also am with people in the domestic discipline community in seeing no need for safewords in the general course of life—my life, anyway.

Finally, I also like the fact that there is very little talk on most domestic discipline (DD) forums about service-orientated submission, “becoming a better submissive” or “slave training”. Like many DD people, I do not consider myself BDSM. (Not that I have anything against these things—to each his own.) I like the fact that men in the DD community seem to take in their stride or even enjoy (rather than get angry or upset about) a little resistance now and again.

My quibbles with domestic discipline are just that—quibbles rather than anything more damning. There is a *lot* of common ground between Taken In Hand and the domestic discipline (DD) community. I happen to know that many who consider themselves DD agree with me but still consider themselves DD. So please keep all this in mind when you read the following comments.

My problem with domestic discipline (DD) is partly a matter of finding some statements or definitions of it embarrassingly deluded and logically and philosophically unsound, but it is mainly a matter of having a slightly different focus from that of the domestic discipline (DD) community.

To take the second bit first, the focus of Taken In Hand is on the idea of living under the control of a man—not because men are superior, or biology or the Bible dictates it, but just because it is our (Taken In Hand folks') preference. And the more in control the man is, the better, as far as I am concerned. It is erotic. It feels right. (If anyone jumps to the conclusion that I am saying that other preferences are wrong, I will feel like using intemperate language in exasperation at their wilful misunderstanding!)

The focus of the domestic discipline (DD) community is slightly different. The discussions on DD forums tend to be tightly focused on “discipline”, lists of rules and infractions, “accountability”, “boundaries, limits and guidelines”, “misbehaviour”, “consistency”, and punishment, and how all this allegedly helps women's behaviour improve.

Except that it doesn't. Or at least, there seems to be a rather worrying tendency for many women writing to become ever more “naughty” and childish, getting ever more “discipline”, and it looks to me as though this whole thing could be destructive unless the woman happens to be with a man who is also aroused by the idea of having a recalcitrant child for a wife. I fear that some men

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might get thoroughly sick of that. Here is an example of the sort of post that troubles me. I could be mistaken, but to me, this woman sounds like a "naughty child" talking about being in trouble with a parent:

I was already a little nervous that I lost my husband's debit card because I did not put it in my wallet like I know I am supposed to do and he has told me to many times before. By the time we called it in missing somebody had already spent \$75 on it. I knew I was in big trouble then. When I got home he wouldn't even talk to me cus he was so mad at me.

For those who like this kind of thing, great! But if so then I think it is a mistake to try to claim that what they are doing is really about behaviour modification. It clearly isn't. It is how they connect erotically, that's all. There is nothing wrong with that; I just find the ostensible explanations people give for what they are doing transparently false.

There seems to be quite a lot of self-delusion in the domestic discipline community. As argued in these articles* and these articles,† the idea that domestic discipline of women is just like parents spanking their children is patently false.

Children do not crave punishment, they hate it. You have only to look at any forum in the domestic discipline community to see that it is usually the woman who is positively craving

and begging for a man's authority and "discipline". The idea that the woman hates "domestic discipline" like a child hates being spanked is laughable. If you want to know what it means to hate being beaten, go to a battered women's refuge and talk to a battered wife who has escaped her abuser. Her state of mind bears no resemblance to the state of mind of a woman who is wholeheartedly choosing to be in a relationship in which the man is in control and expresses it physically sometimes. She *wants* this relationship, and she *wants* the "discipline", painful and even scary though it may be at the time. She would not want to be with a man who would not do that. The battered wife would *love* her husband not to do that. Many in the DD community are in denial about this, in my opinion.

I personally do not have a discipline fetish and am about as interested in spanking as I am in knitting, and I do not fantasise about writing lines, being made to stand in the corner, "loss of computer privileges" or other infantilising "punishments". So for me personally, the focus of DD forums on "discipline" and punishment and spanking is a bit off. The *only* respect in which I have *any* interest in spanking is if it is the way a man is expressing his control, as in this article.‡ Otherwise I find the whole idea altogether boring. I am not a spanko.

Nor am I a woman who needs discipline, "domestic" or otherwise. I am a fully-functioning, competent,

* "Why is real punishment spanking erotic?" 22 February 2004.

† "Is this really consensual?" 27 January 2005.

‡ "Don't forget your whip," 27 August 2004.

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able adult whose parents were sticklers for formal etiquette. I know how behave impeccably, and I don't need a good thrashing to "teach me the errors of my ways", any more than any man does (and quite possibly a good deal less!). I cannot remotely identify with the idea that women are out-of-control childish creatures in need of a firm hand, while men are paragons of self-control and all other virtues in the known universe and quite possibly a few more besides. We are all human beings; we all make mistakes; and I don't think it is helpful to pedestalise men in this way.

The idea that being taken in hand is about women being inferior to men, or being faulty, out of control, over-emotional, irrational and in need of "help" which men are somehow not in need of *just doesn't add up*. I am not those things but still I have a strong desire to be under the authority of a man. It is not that Taken In Hand women need "help", it is that we have a deep *desire* to be under a man's control, because that is *sexy* for us, and for no other reason.

Men are fallible human beings too, and they make mistakes just as women do. So when I read writing on domestic discipline forums that seems to imply that the man should be in control because he is better than the woman or knows more, I cannot associate myself with the idea of domestic discipline.

In addition, the idea that "might makes right" is a huge mistake, philosophically. Being bigger and stronger does not mean you know more. It does not mean that you are

more likely to be right than someone less strong, it just means that you have the edge in terms of physical control. Might does not make right, it is just more fun!

The idea that knowledge can be imparted through the buttocks is, er, entertaining, perhaps, but it is a veritable can of worms epistemologically (that is to say, in terms of the philosophy of knowledge). Behaviourist conditioning can work for animals but human beings are much more complex mentally—we have minds and think, and knowledge is gained through thought, not the buttocks. (This is not to say that a good thrashing has zero effect, merely that its effects are not the simple, direct, behaviourist conditioning effects many DD folk think they are. See this article* for some of my thoughts on that subject.)

For me, a man being in control is nothing to do with the tiresome-sounding task of improving a faulty woman, it is about creating a vibrant, thrilling, deeply fulfilling relationship which remains sexually fulfilling and never descends into the stale platonic buddy type relationship that is so common in society at large. For me, being under a man's authority is about retaining our awareness of one another as being different from each other. It is about being aware of myself as a woman, and being aware of the man as being a man rather than sexless/unisex. It is about being true to myself as a woman with a desire to be with a man who needs to be in

* "Why you should not withhold spanking!" 29 November 2003.

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control in an intimate relationship, it has nothing to do with needing “help” or “discipline”.

It is worth noting, though, that the husbands in DD relationships do appear to be loving, caring and focused on their wives rather than being the self-serving narcissists appearing to inhabit the D/s world—at least, if their respective posts and forums are anything to go by. DD may glorify “misbehaviour” on the part of women (groan), but (unlike much of the D/s community) it does not glorify self-serving narcissism on the part of men. I like the fact that Taken In Hand encourages both husbands and wives to be kind and considerate to one another, and to take responsibility for their own actions.

Another problem I personally have with domestic discipline is that the heavy focus of DD forums on “discipline” is at the expense of all other forms of expressing control. I personally would like to see a more general focus on the idea of the man's authority and control instead of on punishment and in particular, spanking. When spanking is the focus, people seem to lose sight of more subtle forms of control, and indeed, more extreme forms of control.

Some readers reacted very badly when I posted my When rape is a gift* article, objecting to the fact that (as they saw it) I was going off-topic. (?!?) The same thing happened to a lesser extent when I posted my The

alpha male and masculine power† article. Similarly, when DeeMarie wrote about Asserting dominance physically forcefully,‡ there were complaints from DD people and others that her article was discussing something other than spanking. And whenever anyone posts about the allure of feeling fear or trepidation in connection with a man, or about anything remotely “extreme”, or the idea of ownership, possession, obedience, or even about the kind of submission described in books like *Fascinating Womanhood*) DD people complain. There is such a narrowness in the domestic discipline community!

A woman once told me that the reason she no longer posts on DD lists is because she found that when she was reading DD material, her own focus narrowed and she did not like that. I have noticed the same thing. That is why I do not read much domestic discipline stuff myself any more.

Having said all that though, I strongly disagree with criticisms I have read of domestic discipline saying that it is abusive, non-consensual, unloving, irresponsible and the like. It seems to me a genuine and very successful attempt to create ways of being in long-term relationships that are fulfilling and exciting. Moreover, my misgivings above notwithstanding, I think it is true that domestic discipline can (for those for whom it has appeal) solve

† “The alpha male and masculine power,” 13 April 2004.

‡ “Asserting dominance physically forcefully,” 21 October 2004.

* “When rape is a gift,” 15 March 2004.

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problems and bring peace and harmony to many relationships, for the reasons I gave here.* It is a fact that for those who like it (and even for me!) being physically taken in hand by the man one loves can be cathartic and soothing, it can make one feel submissive, and it can be very connecting.²⁸⁰

"AN ETIQUETTE IN THE RELATIONSHIP" [20 DECEMBER 2004]

My partner, Catherine, who is 35, and I have been together six years. I am 49. We live in the UK. I have visited your site a few times since discovering it in the summer, and have read many of the articles, and it is worth saying what a relief it is to hear intelligent voices discussing a subject that is fraught with misunderstanding. I thought I would take the opportunity to share my own thoughts and our experiences with you all.

I think a Taken In Hand relationship is about expressing sexuality, not in an old-fashioned way, but in an honest way. It is not about bullying, but about willing surrender leading to a wonderful release of tension which allows us to be in love. It is not about repression, but about an etiquette in the relationship, about making agreements that help us to live in harmony, where there are no hidden gripes or judgements.

Because a sexual relationship is physically intimate, part of the eti-

quette is to use physical means to express it. There is something about a man taking a woman in hand, using his natural domination wisely and intelligently, and for the woman to find security and safety in feeling his male strength hold her, and for action to be taken in whatever way has been agreed between them. There is something about this that enables the woman to express her female strength with more certainty in the relationship.²⁸¹

"WHAT BEING TAKEN IN HAND MEANS TO ME" [21 DECEMBER 2004]

I know that I have often wondered what it was I was really craving. Was it love? Was it control? Was it dominance, or was it spanking? And needless to say it was all of the above, but how it was put together was the real key.

For most of my life I have been blamed, held accountable and was responsible for not only my own life, but often for others' mistakes. I was held accountable whether it came down to me or not. And I was a nervous wreck for many years. I could no longer distinguish what I was responsible for or where my accountability ended.

Now this is just a small sample of why being Taken In Hand is so vital, so earthly important to me and why it is different from DD (domestic discipline). Yet let it be known, I do want to be spanked. The feelings of the sting are very important to me. However, saying that, if that sting were suddenly to be gone, my real need would still be there.

* "Why you should not withhold spanking!" 29 November 2003.

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And what is my real need? That is to be taken in hand. And now we have to unravel what that means for me. It means many things. I need to be able to unburden. To not always be the one who is responsible. To have the choice of control and submission. To have my privileges altered so my wellbeing, something I cannot do for myself, is put in place so I am happy. I need a chance to reflect, not constantly shoot from the hip. I need to have accountability, to be able to share a fear, a worry or just thoughts on how something was handled, or solved. Always my choice, but now I have backup.

Someone who cares. Someone who is strong enough for both of us. And I am plenty strong. But his power and unassuming strength gives me the ability to relax. To be able to submit to his will when that alone gives me the security to sleep well at night. He is dominant. Our situation is domestic. So yes, we fit into that category. But my needs, my deep cravings and needs are really about being watched, cared for and having walls of limits to create that safe place I need, want and desire.

No longer is it considered "safe" for me to take on what isn't mine. My rope goes as far as my comfort allows. And I alone created that scope that I need. He only enforces and holds the end that keeps me where I told him I wanted to be. That's what it means to me to be taken in hand.

Now if we want to talk about the tactile side of things, we can discuss spanking and how that feels and what it means. Yes for me it is a sure fire way to drop me into my submis-

sion and my trust of him. To connect me in the most powerful of ways to him, to his power and ultimately to my sexuality. But my first order of things? To have the coral only as big as I want to play in. My world where I am safe and happy. No longer that big bad place where I was tentative and nervous.

My dream came true, and while I didn't really know what that dream was. The words that ring true to me: I was taken in hand. And such love those hands hold.²⁸²

"THE SUBMISSIVE ALPHA FEMALE" (21 DECEMBER 2004)

The submissive alpha female is a woman who is strong, confident, bold, and assertive in her life and her dealings with people in general—but who wants a dominant man in her life because she finds it sexually exciting to be dominated by a strong, powerful man. She might or might not be in a position of authority at work; but she has a personality and a level of competence such that she could be in such a position and command respect.

I think this is just one of those things where people have different language preferences. Some people here seem to prefer the term "dominant" or "high-dominance woman" to describe a very similar thing, and I seem to recall that The Boss once even suggested* the abbreviation "Dd"—to suggest that

* "Who says you have to be submissive?" 15 July 2004.

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even though the woman is dominant, her man is more dominant.

But I have an allergy to using the word “dominant” to describe a woman (and especially myself), much like many women here seem to be a little uncomfortable using the word “submissive”. So while I would say that an “alpha submissive” woman (or a “submissive alpha female”) is assertive and even aggressive when the situation demands it, I would not say that she is dominant. To me, the word “dominance” connotes power *over* others (or another)—whereas by the “alpha” prefix I meant more a power from within that does not really seek to dominate others but often ends up being in charge anyway.

I guess, really, I don't much like the word “dominate” used in any context other than the sexual one of male dominance and female submission. (Or maybe sports like boxing and wrestling, and also war—any activity that implies actual *physical* conquest of an opponent.) While I have been in positions of authority at work, I usually don't view it as a conflict where I'm trying to get control over another person. And I was never that way in sports, either, although I did martial arts for a few years and loved it.

So I tend to think of myself as a woman who is not submissive except sexually (that is, in a romantic relationship); and also as someone who is not really dominant in any context or circumstance. That is, I might find myself in positions where I need to exert some authority and I can do that; but I have never enjoyed

dominating anyone, not even non-sexually.

Hmmmm. Well, OK, that may not be entirely true. Because I always enjoyed beating the boys in math; and I do enjoy winning a good debate. But once again, I don't really think of that as domination because it's not physical. I don't use the word “dominate” to describe intellectual endeavors. But apparently other people sometimes consider such behavior dominating or even domineering.

I always thought it would be fun to beat my man in an intense intellectual argument, and then have him get physical about it, and show me who's really the boss, and why. Sadly, however, that does not seem to be the response of most males when they find a female beating them in math or logic or etc. Instead, they seem to conclude that she enjoys dominating men, and so they either lose interest because of their wounded egos (if they're dominant) or else they start groveling and put her up on a pedestal (if they're submissive).

Where, oh where, is the man who understands that a woman who whips his butt in an intellectual argument might just be looking to get hers whipped by his strong, manly hands?²⁸³

“THE IMPORTANCE OF CONQUEST” (21 DECEMBER 2004)

When I describe myself as “submissive” I mean something rather specific: I mean that I really enjoy being *conquered* by a strong, mascu-

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line, dominant man, and being *forced* to surrender to him. But I don't just submit to a man if he is not able and willing to actually conquer me. I don't even quite know what that would mean.

I find it hard to relate at all to the idea of submission without conquest. If the man is just going to sit there like a lump of jello and not actively dominate me, then why in the world would I submit to him? I might as well "submit" to the sofa.

That doesn't mean that I would always put up active physical resistance to the man's authority; it just means that he has to be willing to use his strength on a regular basis to physically reinforce and emphasize his dominance over me. I do enjoy play fighting, and if I didn't get "conquered" at least a few times a week, then I'd start to wonder just who this guy thinks he is, trying to boss me around. Without some forceful physical conquest, I would just resent him giving me any orders.

The forceful conquest is what moves me into surrender and bliss. There's that sweet moment when my challenge and my resistance suddenly crumbles under the erotic thrill of fear and being overpowered; where I suddenly become incredibly weak and melt in a puddle of submissive desire. I guess maybe that's what swooning is. If so, it's a wonderful thing. :)

But I couldn't begin to figure out how to melt into a puddle on my own. Nor would it be any fun, of course. That wouldn't be the same thing at all. The man has to learn how to *make* me do that.

So "submissive" to me has more to do with how submissive I *feel*, and not so much to do with how readily I obey a man's commands. That latter criterion is what I might call "obedient" and I suppose I'm not really very obedient at all; unless the man brings that out as well.

So I guess maybe the order that things go in for me is: Tension/challenge/resistance → his physical force → his conquest → my surrender → my submission → my obedience. (But, of course, sex also fits in there somewhere too; at least sometimes.)

Notice that in this Taken In Hand model of submission, the man is the one doing most of the work. Attaining conquest over a spirited woman is not an effortless thing. Whereas in another common view (I'll call it the "Lazy Boy" version of submission), all the man has to do is just say what he wants and then the woman does all the work of "serving" him and catering to his whims; and that's considered "submission". Umm, no thanks.²⁸⁴

"IS CHASTITY OVERRATED?" (22 DECEMBER 2004)

Chastity is probably the very last thing I would recommend to someone who is seeking to find a compatible mate. Within marriage, one *essential* area of compatibility is sexual compatibility. And I don't see any way for two people to determine if they are sexually compatible unless they have sex, and lots of it. Preferably they will do that *before* marriage, so they don't

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end up legally entangled with someone they find they do cannot have good sex with.

But then, I would not just advocate having sex with a potential husband or wife; I would also recommend that both men and women spend some time sowing their wild oats before settling down. Because unless one experiments with different sexual partners, one cannot really get a good idea of the kinds of sex that are enjoyable or objectionable. If you only ever know *one* sexual partner, then you have no way of knowing how they might compare to another one. (Which, I believe, is one motivation for pushing chastity — men don't want their wives to know their, um, shortcomings in comparison to other men.)

All this business about how “cherished” virginity is in a wife strikes me as sanctimonious hoohah. A virgin bride is an ignorant bride. She has no idea how to bring pleasure to her mate, or even what she herself might enjoy. And if the man is a virgin, too, that just doubles the trouble. In that case, it's going to be the blind leading the blind, and it could be a long time before they begin to learn how to have really great sex. And even when they do, there will always be the nagging knowledge that they have no other experiences to compare it to: is it possible their marital sex life is woe-fully inadequate, compared to the kind of sex they might have had with someone else? They will never know.

I came of age in the 1970s, and my mother was very liberal with regard to sex. She would leave the house so

my boyfriend and I could have some privacy, and she would pay for our hotel room when we went off on vacations. She made sure that I was well educated about sex; and also that I had the pill, as soon as I started being sexually active. (At first, we used condoms and foam; but my mom took me to the doctor as soon as I brought it up.)

This was in the “free love” era, before AIDS, and so pregnancy was the only major worry. Chastity was not considered much of a virtue among the folks I knew. And it was a mystery to me why *anyone* would think that virginity was a good thing, because first-time sex was painful and difficult; it only got better after the virginity was gone. Of all the men I've been intimate with, I've never met even one who would have preferred a virgin.

My high school romance was sweet, deep, intense, and idealistic, but ultimately short-lived. He was not the man for me, in the long run; nor was anyone else I ever met quite right, either. But that did not stop me from meeting men that I liked and lusted after; as well as men that I loved and spent a few years with, and kept as best friends for decades. But no matter whether it was an exclusive relationship or a one-night stand, the wonderful thing was learning about sex itself, all the glorious ways that a man and a woman could relate at that most intimate level. And as I learned, I became better at loving men; and it was also obvious to me that men who had more sexual experiences were also better lovers.

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I suppose from some biblical view, other people would think there should be some shame involved in casual sex, or at least some regret, some twinge of guilt. But that was never the case for me. The whole idea that sex was somehow sinful or shameful just seemed absurd to me. It made no sense at all to me that such a deeply sacred experience should be regarded as dirty or impure. (As Ayn Randonce said, when I ran into people with that viewpoint, it made me think that *they* were the ones who were tainted, not me.) Sex was one thing in life that seemed purely good, and that was that.

That does not mean that I was completely fulfilled in my sexual relationships, though; because I always had this deep submissive longing that never seemed to get completely met. But even plain ordinary sex was a holy thing to me. There was just the sheer wonderfulness of a man's flesh, the smell and the feel of it, that made me realize the goodness of Nature itself. I only wish that I had been better able to understand and articulate my own needs for sexual submission when I was younger; perhaps I would have been motivated to find more dominant men to relate to.

However, the glorious "free love" years came to an end in the 80s, with the discovery of AIDS and the new emphasis on safe sex. Now I'm all for safe sex, even if I don't always like the actual mechanics what that means in practice. But it certainly does not need to mean abstinence; condoms and spermicidal foam are very effective at preventing HIV

transmission. (And since the female-to-male transmission rate is so low, a woman is pretty safe if she's sleeping only with straight men, and always uses condoms.) Still, my love life slowed way down as I became much more careful. Even my friends who have open polyamorous relationships have learned to be more careful about who does what with whom and how.

Now, I can't help but feel sorry for people who grew up in the age of AIDS, and who never had a chance to know the joyous, heady, liberating days of sexual freedom that followed the 1960s. Nowadays, while most people don't wait for marriage in order to have sex, most of them still seem to feel that you have to be in a committed relationship in order to enjoy sex. For me, that would have been much too stifling when I was young. Sex itself was a holy rite, and it could not be bound by "commitment". Now that I'm older, it's not such a bad thing to live with; but for a young person to have such tight restrictions on their love life seems sad to me. I can only hope that they will have a large number of such "committed relationships" before they get themselves tangled up in marriage.

Anyway, that's the view on chastity from where I sit. I just never had any use for it at all, and probably never will. I can see being in an exclusive romantic relationship, of course. But I see no point in abstaining from sex just because one does not happen to be in such a relationship. I would strongly advise safe sexual practices, of course; but no activity in life is entirely risk-free,

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including sex. There are ways to be safe and still explore the wonders of sexuality.

I would not insist that everyone else should share my views in favor of wild passions, erotic liberation and sexual exploration; but neither do I feel others are justified in implying that we should all share their bible-based views that extol the “virtues” of chastity, either. If that’s the view from within their specific religion, fine. But let’s try to remember that there are plenty of other religions around that would disagree on the value of chastity; as well as atheists and agnostics, too. Not everyone is going to regard chastity as good and virginity as a “treasure”. Some of us regard both of those as unfortunate nuisances, and we happen to regard sex itself as the sacred and priceless treasure.²⁸⁵

“THE DANCE OF CONSENT” (22 DECEMBER 2004)

Wanting your husband to take you in hand, maybe to spank you if you get out of line, to take control of the relationship, is not a fashionable way to want to live in this day and age. It seems to imply to those on the outside that the woman is deemed inferior to the man, that she has no say in things, that she has to do everything he says or else, and that she’s obviously just been lucky so far that he’s not asked—no, told—her to do something she really doesn’t want to do. And at that point it’s all too easy to point the finger at the man and cry “Abuser!”

It’s an understandable reaction given the emphasis placed on things like domestic violence and women’s equality. It’s a prevalent opinion that if a man hits a woman and they’re not involved in any obvious sort of BDSM then he’s abusing her. It’s also a prevalent opinion that a woman shouldn’t answer to her (male) partner in their relationship and that to do so is somehow being wimpy and letting the side down. But without knowing the more intimate details of a relationship, it’s very easy to draw completely inaccurate conclusions, and people seem to quick to think the worst of someone—possibly because the actual truth is inconceivable to them.

And in this day and age, it does seem inconceivable to some people that a woman would want her man to be in charge. Yet clearly many of us do. We want to feel his control and know it as an extension of his love for us. We want him to take us in hand and know that is one of the ways he shows he cares. We follow his lead, but we don’t expect to be treated as mindless automatons, but rather as a valued participant in the relationship.

Yes, we give him our consent to do what he likes—even to spank us if at the time he decides to, we definitely don’t wish to be spanked. Consensual non-consent is a simple enough idea, but to the unwary it could lead to a very nasty can of worms being opened. Which is why a sensible degree of caution is needed. The type of relationships discussed on this site seem to me to be more suited to long term relationships where both partners are prepared to invest

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some time and effort in simply getting to know each other and gradually scaling things up. However much you want it, however much you know he wants it, it can be a very scary moment when you say to your partner "I want you to be in charge." But if you have some knowledge of each other than you can give what seems like blanket consent to him and still know you're going to be safe. If both partners are reasonable adults, if there is a mutual bond of trust, then any hiccups and problems are more likely to be talked about than ignored. If not, then whatever style of relationship you're in, there's going to be problems.

There is potential for problems—someone desperate to explore her submissive nature may get taken in by a would-be abuser. But then again, so might someone desperate to lose their virginity. Taking risks is dangerous, but life is often about taking risks—the trick is in minimising them. Getting to know someone as a person before you embark on any sort of longer term relationship is a sensible precaution.

The real effort in maintaining this type of relationship—or any, I suspect—is hard to describe. It's more mundane than what is and isn't allowed, what has and hasn't been discussed. It's about all the little things—noticing how your partner reacts well to certain things and with repulsion and fear to others, and altering course accordingly. It's about all the odd little chats and comments that somehow all contribute to the framework but are so hard to pinpoint. It's about all the

little rituals that mean so much to you and all the little irritants that really get on your nerves but—if anyone mentioned either you'd be surprised because until they're brought to your attention you're unaware of them. Consent becomes more than just the woman saying to the man he's in charge—it becomes a complex dance with each reacting and adapting to the other's reactions.²⁸⁶

"WOMEN NEED TO KNOW WHEN NOT TO DO AS THEY'RE TOLD!" (23 DECEMBER 2004)

It is very important indeed to know when *not* to do what you are told.

For instance what if you want to be taken in hand? If you always did what you were told you would never get to feel that lovely just been spanked feeling. What if it has been so long since you have felt his control that you are getting that sort of lost feeling? (Depending on the person this could be an hour, day month, year or whatever.) You know the feeling I'm talking about. Of course this is only true if you are a woman and you like to be taken in hand. If you are not and/or you do not, do not read any further.

Timing is important when choosing your moment to not do what you are told. If you choose your moment carelessly you could end up getting a little more taken in hand than you want. When he says, "Come here for a kiss," with a lovely smile on his face, that may be a good time to try defiance. With your best

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playful look in your eye say, with your sweetest of sweet voices, something like, "Make me!" (You could also try telling him where he could kiss you, but I do not advise it, too risky....Not that I have ever tried it or anything.) Any self respecting Taken in Hand kind of guy will know what you need when you say that. Then you just need to decide how much you are going to fight him for that kiss he wants. Well you want it too, but sometimes there is just something better about it when it is taken from you! Is he willing to fight you for it? How will he go about getting it from you?

If you are like me, you are hoping he will bite the bait and find a way to get you to kiss him—some nice, strong, manly, wilful way of getting that kiss. Nothing serious of course, but serious enough to let you know that he gets what he wants when he wants it. Feeling his control and getting a kiss, what could be better?

I know, I know, some of you will complain that it is awfully close to the dreaded "b" word. It is a very unpopular word in some quarters. But there is no doubt about it, I find that if I can feel his control and power in fun situations often, then we do not have very many serious taken in hand moments. It is like I have a kind of amnesia when it comes to being taken in hand. (Maybe some things are better off forgotten?!) Intellectually I know he is in control. But there is a cave woman inside of me who starts to get doubts if I have not had some real, physical taken in hand experience in a while. I need him to prove his toughness, his strength of will, his resolve.

What I do not need is a fairly blistered backside very often. So I play with him. I taunt his manliness. I push his resolve. If we do it for fun, then he can show me that yes he will play ball if push comes to shove. That little cave woman is satisfied: she knows that if he will fight for control in a fun way, then he will do it in a big way if necessary. It is all subconscious. The cave woman works under the radar; my intellectual self knows better than to play with fire...Let sleeping lions lie and all that. The sneaky cave woman likes giving my husband a little test every now and then—and the sex this kind of electricity allows us to have!

I find his control in our Taken in Hand relationship very erotic. So why should we have to wait for the serious moments that do not come very often to feel that power? If we waited I am sure that the number of serious taken in hand incidences would climb for us. That cavewoman gets louder and louder the longer we go between taken in hand moments. Who needs a seriously blistered backside when you can have a kiss you wanted anyway? I am lucky my husband loves to show me he is willing to use this control on a regular basis so we have no conflict here, well, no conflict that we do not want. He would fight me as much as I am willing to struggle to the get the kiss he wants, he will fight until I surrender the kiss to him.

So as far as I am concerned knowing your man is knowing exactly when *not* to do what you are told!²⁸⁷

"COMMUNICATION, CONSENT AND CONNECTION" (24 DECEMBER 2004)

Many of the arguments and fears about Taken In Hand in general seem to be based on the assumption that, when a woman enters such a relationship, she gives up the person she really is and becomes the person someone else wants her to be. This in turn opens her up and makes her vulnerable to the whims and ego of a controller who might misuse that power in an abusive and destructive way.

I am not by any means saying that this *never* happens in what was intended to be a Taken In Hand relationship. Certainly misjudgements are made and people who are not suited in temperament to this kind of life are put in a position of control or submission that they can't handle, but this hardly unique to a Taken In Hand situation and it happens frequently in other relationships also.

For 28 years, I lived in just such a conventional relationship with a man who, apart from a bit of pushing and shoving very occasionally in the early days of our marriage, never laid a finger on me in anger, but who was nevertheless an expert in the art of verbally making me feel two feet tall and stupid with it, and I know from talking to others that I was by no means unique in this experience. Interestingly, it was not until I got online and began to read about the underlying features of what for me constitutes a "true" DD relationship that I realised that I had the right and the power not to be treated in this way.

The first thing I noticed about the pattern of Taken In Hand is that it very often grows from what was originally a loving and close relationship in which the two participants have lost, or never really had, the skills of true communication, and have begun to drift apart as a result. Along with the verbal communication skills there is often a lack of ability to watch and read each other's behaviour patterns and to avoid the frustration that arises when behavioral indicators are ignored as something not important, or are simply not recognised.

Through the development of vigilance and mutual awareness, taking her in hand seizes these negatives, and turns them around into something that can be used to improve both communication, and subsequently, connection in the relationship.

The second most common basis for a Taken In Hand relationship seems to be a situation where both partners know exactly what it is they want and need from the relationship before they enter into it. Either way, if the decision to enter into a Taken In Hand relationship isn't completely consensual at least in general principle, then it isn't the real thing.

Once it is agreed that Taken In Hand is the way a couple wants to go, the whole thing become much more individualistic and unique to the couples concerned.

To begin with, some couples may want and need only a little control – perhaps just to provide a support mechanism for things like health and safety or relationship issues. Control outside of these specific

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areas may naturally assert itself over time, leading to a more thoroughly Taken In Hand relationship, or it might not.

In other relationships, there may be a certain flexibility and *carte blanche* for the man in deciding precisely when and how to correct and control the woman. Or there may be a situation where both partners want to effect a complete change of atmosphere and direction in their relationship, and once they have together decided exactly what it is that they want to achieve, one partner will give up the driving seat completely.

To my mind, so long as each arrangement works for the couple concerned, and is based on a loving regard for each other and for the relationship as a whole, and so long as there is always room for change arising from the vital skills of talking and listening, no harm is likely to come to either of the participants or to their partnership.

The idea that genuine Taken In Hand relationships are about handing all the power over to one person *to the detriment of the other* is false. What is actually happening is power exchange. That is to say, the man can only take from the woman the amount of control that she is prepared to give up. Thus, she has as much control over the situation as does he. It isn't about one gender being better or more able than the other, but about recognising and openly embracing our different roles as men and woman and using them to complement our relationships in a way that brings the two different elements together as one whole.²⁸⁸

"AN IRON HAND IN A VELVET GLOVE" (25 DECEMBER 2004)

My husband and I have a Taken In Hand relationship in which he is head of the household. He is a former military commander, easily capable of doing a lot of harm to myself or anyone else being well over 6' tall. But there is a fine line between the wuss, as some put it, and the brute.

I regularly beat my husband at board games, analytical thinking and other intellectual pursuits. Having a post grad degree and an IQ well over 140, it's a given. We both are leaders in our industry and I run a company of my own, albeit not a Fortune 500 one, I founded a successful business 4 years ago. Both of us are Alpha types and I am regularly dominant over other women I encounter... and more than a few men.

Submission is an individual thing. I run the finances in our home (each to their talents), my husband still has final say on matters but defers to my suggestions when they are clearly well considered and/or in the best interest of our family as we have several children.

I would laugh if he asked me on the sofa to get a beer, *but* if I hear a certain tone or word, I will get that beer right away. The mood comes and it goes, but we have agreed upon tones and words that indicate when not to trifle with him. And I must admit, that does it for me and it makes the power arrangement very neat and clean. If he told me to

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wash the socks, and pulled my silver chain while doing it, he'd have a pile of nice warm fluffy socks in an hour!

For some, that means physical conquest, but don't forget the deeper, more sinister and erotically powerful *psychological* form of dominance and submission. Once you have established that, you can trust more on the physical.

We did not start with physical and rarely use it. Iron hand, velvet glove, see. It is safe and less tiresome for the man to figure out your thresholds and maintenance level. I am high maintenance in that, but the word or look is enough to keep it up most of the time. I am not being very good at my role being submissive if my husband must work too hard at it all the time to keep up his end of the bargain—the sexy devil! ;-)

When you first know someone and don't have the benefit of 10 or 20 years together, see if you can establish that mental/emotional/psychological link of dominance first. Then it's safe to move on to bigger and perhaps spankier (is that a word?) things....²⁸⁹

"GIVE THE RIGHT IMPRESSION?" (26 DECEMBER 2004)

Many of us who are single spend a lot of time and money in activities we hope will expose us to greater opportunities to connect with a potential life-long companion. For me, that companion must be one who is compatible with my quirky, sometimes dull, sometimes explosive personality. She is the one who will fill the aching gap in the core of my

being. Not just any person can do that, which means I must be selective. To be available for the right one, I must reject many. The one I select may also reject me, which is a valid part of the process, since desirability must be mutual.

At one time, I regarded rejection as a put-down. OK, so perhaps it is. It stung quite a bit when a potential love interest didn't reciprocate to the degree I wished. It even made me doubt my self-worth. It took me quite a long time to realize that rejection is a necessary tool in my search, a good thing, and that I need to accept it as such, since it is very helpful in my search for the woman I want.

If I am rejected, that is not an occasion for a bruised ego. Rather, it means that there is something wrong with *us*, and that *we* are not meant for each other. "Try again" is not the same thing as failure. It simply means that one combination didn't mix properly.

I used to try to be so careful to give just the "right impression" to the woman I wanted to attract. I now understand that the "right impression" is wrong for me. The "right impression" will attract the wrong woman. I should be myself and unabashedly so. That way, acceptance or rejection will happen much more quickly. Anything that fetters that process is a waste of effort. Putting on airs and pretending to be something I am not definitely hampers me.²⁹⁰

"FEAR" (27 DECEMBER 2004)

It's fear:

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*fear of being swallowed up by passion
fear of letting go
fear of being human
fear of life.
fear.
That's why
they cry
"Don't do this!
it's bad."
sad.²⁹¹*

"VIRTUES OF THE LOWLY SWITCH" (28 DECEMBER 2004)

Although it has not become an issue on the Taken In Hand website, it might be time to offer a suggestion for those times when a woman needs to be taken in hand when she is pregnant or there are children in the house. At such times—as well as when a woman is truly badly behaved—I recommend reliance on the lowly switch.

Stripped of leaves and sharp knots, a straight twig about eighteen inches long and having the diameter of a common wooden pencil can be remarkably effective. Although humble in appearance, a switch in a man's hand is the one instrument that women universally understand—even if they have never experienced its application personally.

The most shrewish women either know or strongly suspect that, over time, a switch will straighten her out—especially if her husband applies it briskly to the back of her thighs as well as her buttocks! Even when applied to her bare bottom, the switch has a *high pitch sting* that no amount of *tightening* of the buttocks can lessen.

Except for a woman's repentance, application of the switch is relatively silent. Moreover, it is safe to apply to buttocks because, rapidly applied with flicks of the wrist, it affects only the surface of the skin rather than the underlying muscular structure—as might be disturbed by a heavy paddle or belt. Thus, it is safe for pregnant women.

For the truly recalcitrant but disrobed woman, whipping the thighs is also more likely to make her cry in repentance. When combined, total nudity and the switch are particularly effective because they intensify a woman's sense of vulnerability without causing her appreciable harm. Regardless of provocation, the switch need not be applied viciously to be thoroughly effective!

The proof of the pudding, so to speak, is in how the woman's attitude changes over time. Women who have seriously been taken in hand have a very different attitude from those who froward and forward women who have not been taken in hand for the purpose of disciplining.²⁹²

"I WAS DRAWN TO HIS OLD-FASHIONED WAYS" (29 DECEMBER 2004)

I'm new to this group and still not sure if there is an introduce yourself thread, so I'll jump right in.

I come from a female dominated home and didn't realize that I didn't truly respect my father. I married a European man 12 yrs older than I am and loved his old-fashioned courtly ways. Before the wedding he told me he would be taking a firm

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hand in our marriage but having a father who never stood his ground I really couldn't picture what that would be like. On our honeymoon I was more than happy to let him take charge of the money, order for me in restaurants and decide what our daily activities would be.

Then one afternoon I stepped over the line. He refused to buy me a pair of shoes I wanted and I walked off alone into downtown Athens. He caught up with me, marched me back to the hotel room, lifted up my skirt and paddled my behind like there was no tomorrow. I was in pain, humiliated, angry—but I felt respect for him as I had felt for no other man, certainly not my father. After I had composed myself he hugged me and told me never to argue with him in public again. Of course, we made love to make up.

I felt more loved and more secure than I ever had in my father's home. I had a man who cared. I admired his self-respect. Our family, with him as the undisputed head was "right". I've also learned over the years that once my husband has spanked me and gotten his anger out of his system that the incident that provoked him is over and done with. He doesn't have to simmer for days and soothe his male pride.

It's great to be here.²⁹³

"WHY DID IT TAKE US 20 YEARS?" (31 DECEMBER 2004)

I wonder why it took us so long to get to this place? We were married for almost 20 years before we started living in a Taken In Hand way. I asked my husband why he didn't take me over his knee the first year we were married. He said I would have run home crying to my mom-my if he had. It's true! Besides he was raised to be patient and certainly never to hit a woman so I don't know if it ever even occurred to him.

We get along so much better now and our sex life is so much better than it used to be. I would like to go to every newly married couple and shout out the glories of a Taken In Hand relationship. But as Louise says, this is not everyone's fantasy life.

It has always been mine, and I finally got up the gumption to tell my husband. He tried it and was no dummy to see that a well spanked wife is happier, sweeter, more obedient, and most importantly, very sexually turned-on all the time. He says he will never go back and I don't doubt it. I certainly never want to go back!²⁹⁴

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